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THE KAVIRONDO LUO & CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL DIVISIONS

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LINEAGE FORMATION AMONG THE LUO

By

A. SOUTHALL

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MAKERERE COLLEGE, UGANDA
May 1950

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LINEAGE FORMATION AMONG THE LUO

I. THE SETTING

The Luo people constitute the third largest tribal unit in eastern Africa, and are by far the largest of the Nilotic-speaking peoples, numbering, by 1947 estimates, some 800,000 individuals. They are entirely contained within the three Kavirondo Districts of the Nyanza Province of Kenya except for some thousands who have now crossed its southern border into the Musoma District of the Lake Province of Tanganyika.

In terms of racial distribution the Luo are the spearhead of the great southward [illegible] Kavirondo and Tanganyika are the tip. The nearest Nilotic neighbours of the Luo are the Padhola of the Eastern Province of Uganda, whose territory comes within a few miles of the northern Luo boundary; but linguistically their nearest relatives are the Alur who now live 300 miles away, partly in the south-western corner of the West Nile District of Uganda and partly over the border in the Belgian Congo. In geographical terms the Luo occupy the coastal plains which border Kavirondo Gulf and the open expanse of Lake Victoria for fifty miles or so on either side of the entrance to the gulf, and also the foothills and uplands to which these plains give way a few miles inland. Although their territory forms a continuous block all round the gulf, it bears no correspondence to the boundaries of the North, Central, and South Kavirondo Districts, but within each of these consists respectively of 1 out of 19, 14 out of 15, and 19 out of 30 locations.[1] These locations form the territory of lineages or groups of lineages.[2]

II. PRELIMINARY ARGUMENT

The purpose of this article is to document certain aspects of the theoretical relationship of lineage to family; to demonstrate and interpret the structural importance of females in a system based on strict patrilineal descent; to show the divergence between norm and practice in Luo lineage concepts and Luo lineage activities; and to explain the process by which new lineages of different types are formed by reference to current or recent examples.[3]

If formally questioned on the point, Luo would admit that the members of a lineage are all the agnatic descendants of its founding ancestor, both male and female, living and dead. However, as Mayer remarks (see *The Lineage Principle in Gusii Society*, I.A.I. Memorandum XXIV, p. 7), 'it is no straightforward matter to define the lineage allegiance of women', and the operative members of a lineage in its observable activities are not those who would have to be included in it according to a strict

[1] The word 'location' is in Kenya applied to the [illegible] subdivisions of administrative districts and has a quite different connotation from that with which it is used in the Union of South Africa and elsewhere.

[2] See Evans-Pritchard, 'Luo Tribes and Clans', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, No. VII, where these groups are described.

[3] For some, see next page.

[illegible]

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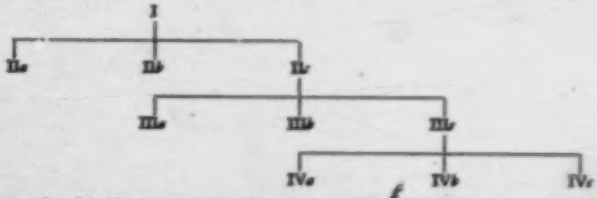
theory of agnatic descent. Most prominent in lineage activities are the group of living male agnates. Dead females, though technically lineage members by descent from the founder in the male line, are of no importance since no segments in their own lineage of origin can ever spring from them. Their only significance was during their lifetime, when they returned from the lineages into which they had married to participate in the rituals of the lineage of their birth. On the other hand, dead females who married into the lineage from outside it, and became eponyms of new lineage segments, are of lasting importance to the lineage as the genealogical points by reference to which parts of the internal articulation of the lineage are defined in theory, and upon whom the grouping of its living members is consequently based in practice. Living females who have married into the lineage are important to it, not only because after death they may become lineage eponyms, but because while alive they are already the heads of groups which Luo regard in theory as the prototypes of lineage segments and, in practice, they are the actual organizers of activities which are both the result and the demonstration of the segmentary principle (see below, p. 37).

The importance of the family to the lineage is shown by the fact that Luo regard every segmentary relationship as having its symbolic prototype within the compound polygynous family. The essential principle of lineage activity is the opposition of co-ordinate segments to one another, coupled with their unity within the same superordinate, itself in similar opposition to other co-ordinates and bound with them in the unity of a still higher superordinate. To the Luo the prototype of this process of segmentation is that aspect of the family cycle (see below, p. 17) in which elementary families are opposed major segments within their superordinate polygynous family, and superordinate segments in relation to the sons who compose them, which sons are themselves the starting-points of major segments in relation to these elementary families. Wives may consequently be considered as the heads of superordinate segments to their sons and of subordinate segments to their husbands. It is important to note that either prototype is equally valid for the Luo; sons in relation to their mother, or co-wives in relation to their husband. Therefore daughters are seen to be of no structural significance though members of the lineage

[1] I have used the following conventions of terminology:



The points numbered in the accompanying diagram represent the eponymous ancestors of a hypothetical series of lineage segments arranged in their genealogical order.

All the segments of series II are *co-ordinate*, and similarly with series III and series IV.

The segments of series III are all *subordinate* of segment IIc, and similarly segment IIIc is the *superordinate* of all the segments in series IV.

The relationship between co-ordinate segments of the same superordinate is expressed in the Luo concept of *likambo*, and I refer to it as their *theory of co-ordination*.

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according to a strict theory of descent, while wives are fundamental to the structure from the start. From the point of view of lineage activity it is indeed true that recruitment to the lineage is of men by descent and of women by marriage.[1] It is the final rite in the sequence of marriage ceremonies which definitively transfers a woman's reproductive powers to her husband's lineage (see below, p. 35, *Rito*). For the Luo, we cannot abstract a man and his sons from the family as the microcosm of lineage,[2] for this is found conceptually—as Luo terminology shows (see below, p. 27)—either in the sons of one mother or the co-wives of one husband. Only when the ideal of family composition is not achieved, because a man fails to beget male issue by more than one wife, or because wives fail to bear more than one son each, can the actual prototype of lineage segmentation be simply a man and his sons. The ideal of family composition, displaying both the segmentary prototypes conceptualized by the Luo, must therefore be regarded as a man with more than one wife, each of whom has more than one son.

What has been said about lineage and family largely explains the other purposes of this article. That the Luo conceptualization of lineage structure in family idiom is something more than a trick of projection is shown by a study of property ownership, marriage, and inheritance in relation to the family. A sufficient account is therefore given of the family system (pp. 16–23) to show the direct influence which these matters can have on the formation of new lineages. The jural arrangements of the family are further correlated with the actual pattern of residence, with the functional alinements of family members to one another, the primary attitudes acquired in early infancy, and the subsequent moulding of these, during the whole period of maturation, into a motivational system which is at once consistent with, and productive of, a segmentary social structure.

In any society structure is an abstraction from observed behaviour, including verbal behaviour, which has a certain degree of continuity over space and time. This behaviour is, obviously, the net result of motivations in the individuals living together in that society. If the society is not changing there will be consistency between the structural behaviour of one generation and the next. A family is, in particular, a direct result of the structural behaviour of a few individuals. But it is also, in general, the result of motivations imposed on the individuals who create it, by a system of upbringing which is itself part of the structured behaviour transmitted from the past. In Luo terms, then, a lineage is the net resultant of a certain type of structural behaviour on the part of all its members from the time of the birth of its founder down to that of its living members. But the activities of its founder were partly determined by the particular characteristics of the family into which he was born, and by the general structural characteristics which determined the form of family composition and child-rearing in it, back from the present to the time of the lineage founder, and long before that.

The reason why I stress certain aspects of the family as the point of departure for describing the lineage system is that such an approach seems to be called for by the material itself, yet it has received less emphasis than the other, in which lineages are treated mainly as groupings inherited from the past, and the structural aspects

[1] See Mayer, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[2] Cf. Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, p. 32.

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|2| of the family and the dynamic features which link it to the lineage system are only treated afterwards. It is a question of methodology in relation to the distinction between the clan principle and the lineage principle in social organization. It may be possible to analyse a clan system in terms of clan and family as two distinct principles operating from opposite poles of the social structure. But this is not the most illuminating way of analysing a segmentary lineage system in which the connexion between lineage and family is of the most intrinsic kind. In a lineage system such as that of the Luo you have a graded series of segments from the level of the living sons of one mother or the living co-wives of one husband up to the maximal lineage. There is a continuous increase in numerical size, territorial size, and distance of origin in time, but common principles operate throughout. There is a gradual change in functional emphasis from one end of the series to the other, but no discontinuity. On the other hand, in a clan system there may be no descent groups at all intervening between the clan and the compound family, the discontinuity is more striking than the similarity of principle, and though there are a few common functions there are many more which are quite distinct. While, therefore, both clans and lineages are behavioural systems transmitted from one generation to another, in the case of clans it is only the extant groupings and the behaviour appropriate to them which is transmitted; whereas, in a lineage system, the inculcation of the approved structural behaviour not only ensures that a new generation will fit into a framework of groupings already extant, but that it will also add its own contribution of new groupings on the pattern of the old. In the one case there is only replacement of old members by new within the old framework; in the other, new members indeed replace the old, but the framework itself is also partially renewed, though the principles underlying the renewal are constant.[1] This renewal springs directly from the segmentary structure of the family and gives to the latter an importance for the lineage which it does not have for the clan.

I prefer, therefore, not to use the term 'clan' in the analysis of the lineage system which forms the subject of this article. In my view an extreme segmentary lineage system is based on an implicit principle fundamentally different from that of clan organization, and to apply the word 'clan' simply because a lineage is exogamous, or because it is the widest grouping based on putatively continuous agnatic descent, only obscures an important distinction. There are other societies (e.g. Tallensi) where clan and lineage principles contribute jointly to the social structure and both terms are properly used, but this is not so in the present case. Whereas in a clan system the operation of exogamous rules may be quite precise, in the Luo groups here studied there is a vagueness of definition as between two consecutive levels of segmentation. This is because the higher level is the one which is claimed as exogamous by the most authoritative elders, who still remember its entire genealogical structure, while the younger members tend to remember it only as far as a lower level of segmentation and, if they had their way, would restrict exogamy to this.

In a series of social groups graded according to their age, the aspect of permanence which pertains to any one of them is correlated with its age in relation to the others involved in the same context. But no lineages are regarded by the Luo as really

[1] Cf. Mayer, op. cit., p. 21: 'the idea of *oganda* (lineage) is essentially one of growth leading to fission'.

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permanent; it is only in relation to a particular transitory situation that they may for convenience be taken as given; as when two segments are in dispute, larger segments of which they are parts may appear to have a relative permanence.[1] Lineages which are exogamous are the largest and oldest of a series the other end of which is found in the segmentary structure of the compound family. The whole series is relative and impermanent because, as it moves forward in time, it is always tending to add new units to itself at one end as old ones drop off at the other. Exogamous lineages are maximal lineages, which are vaguely recognized to be the successors of older groups now forgotten, just as they themselves are destined in turn to be replaced at some future time by newer segments which are at present still regarded as their constituent parts.[2] A clan is expected by its members to be everlasting, and its origin may antedate the earliest events remembered by the tribe as of an historical kind; while lineages of the Luo segmentary type tend to depend on historical processes of settlement which have not yet been obscured by subsequent changes. It is because this is normally so that deviant cases can be accounted for by fictions. Lineages whose genealogies have been fabricated to account for and conform to changes in their structural relations are none the less based on the pattern provided by lineages whose genealogies are not fictional. Clans can be dispersed into far removed sections, yet still forced to recognize common membership through the possession of a common clan name, totem, praise name, or other fixed identifications; but the continued existence of a lineage often depends upon the maintenance of consistency between the recognized genealogical presentation of the relations of its component segments and the pattern of their territorial settlement. Many Luo maximal lineages and their component segments can be represented as both a spatial and a temporal series, either being a consistent projection of the other (e.g. see Figs. 1 and 2 for the temporal, and Figs. 3, 4, 5 for the spatial aspect). A maximal lineage, possibly including a few small groups assimilated to it by group-kinship fictions, may coincide with a tribe[3] where it has maintained this consistent space-time projection, or it may be one of several maximal lineages of roughly equal status, bound by political ties within the same tribe. In Luo lineage theory, then, and also most often in practice, the relationship of siblings at some epoch in the past determines the seniority of their descendants in the present. Hence the genealogies are remembered as an historical validation of the present system of seniority among lineage segments. There may be an opposite process in the case of certain segments, where, as a result of changes in the relations between them, these validations come in time to be based on genealogical fictions, when the original genealogical relations are no longer consistent with the contemporary state of affairs.

On purely linguistic grounds it is difficult to describe Luo lineage organization except on the basis of family organization as the point of departure. For the number of levels of segmentation intervening between maximal lineage and family varies from one lineage to another, and, of course, the number of generations which separate different living members of the same maximal lineage from its founding ancestor varies even more widely. It is impossible to describe such a system adequately by

[1] Cf. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, p. 262.
[2] Cf. Mayer, op. cit., p. 34.
[3] See Evans-Pritchard, 'Luo Tribes and Clans', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, No. VII, p. 4, where 'tribe' is used in this sense and examples are given of different types of tribal composition.

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any series of terms tied to specific levels or even denoting functions characterizing different levels. Any terminology of this type assumes that there is a single system of segmentary articulation for all purposes in every maximal lineage, whereas, among the Luo, certainly two different types of segmentation must be distinguished. For convenience we shall call these two different types class A and class B. The chief characteristic of class A is that all segments in it are corporate landholding units (see below, p. 23), arising from the establishment of lineage settlements and their progressive subdivision. Class B segmentation comprises all those lineages which only emerge into actuality on the specific occasions which demand it. At all other times this class of segments remains a latent basis of grouping. It is especially in answer to ritual needs that they emerge, but it is important to note that the organizational aspect of a ritual occasion (e.g. provision of the necessary food) calls into being a far more extensive segmentary organization than is required for the performance of the ritual itself. This will be fully described later (see below, p. 36). All class A lineages act on occasion as class B lineages too, but the total number of potential class B lineages is far greater than the number of class A lineages extant at any one time. There is some justification for regarding the lineage process as the formation of class B lineages within the compound polygynous family, followed by the establishment, according to certain determinants (see below, pp. 38–43), of some of these class B lineages as class A. It is possible that, in certain circumstances, a class A lineage may relapse again into class B (see below, p. 34). Class B segmentation is genealogical segmentation at its purest, while class A segmentation may be distorted from its genealogical basis by the addition of continuously exercisable functions such as landholding and political order.

Each stage of class A segmentation therefore represents a selection from a large number of possible points of fission derived from both male and female ancestors.[1] When asked about divisions between segments the Luo account for them by reference to the kinship relations of their respective ancestors as represented in the recognized genealogy. These kinship relations are described as if they were those of living persons in an actual homestead. Luo genealogies, then, record far more instances of relations of this type than have ever, apparently, given rise to the segmentation of class A, and the causes which precipitate the latter will be discussed.

In describing both types of lineage noted above, I restrict myself to an *ad hoc* numerical and descriptive nomenclature, by which it is intended to avoid giving any impression of rigidity to what is an exceptionally flexible system. As far as the class A lineages are concerned, segmentation between the level of the maximal lineage and the smallest landholding lineage (primary settlement) may be from twofold to sevenfold; but if as much as sevenfold, the genealogical basis would probably be ignored to the extent of approximating it to a fivefold segmentation, which is common in a large lineage like Karachuonyo (see Fig. 1). Class B segmentation can proceed as far as the genealogy permits, and so may be anything from ten- to twenty-fold in a large lineage, but, of course, it is never more than a small range of the complete system which is brought into operation on any one occasion.

When recent cases of lineage formation are studied, it appears indubitable that the occurrence, at all levels of segmentation, of lineages with female eponyms must be

[1] See Fig. 1 (class A) and Figs. 2 and 6 (class B), also diagram on p. 40.

[text continues on p. 12]

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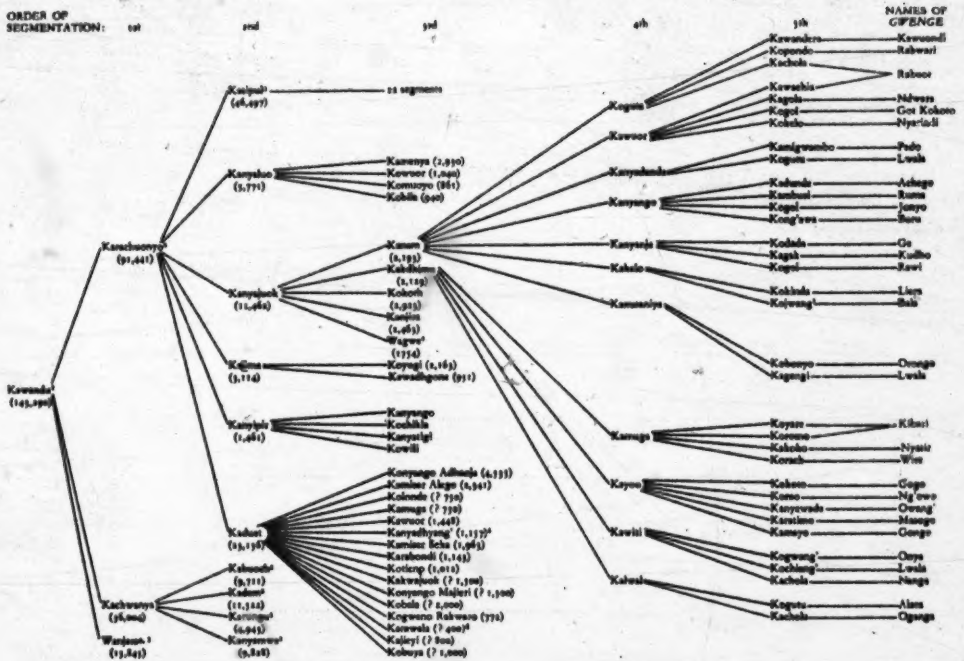

FIG. 1

DIAGRAM OF CLASS A SEGMENTATION

Bracketed figures underneath or to the side of names are 1947 populations.

¹ The maximal exogamous lineage.

² 'Tribes' according to Evans-Pritchard's classification, in *Luo Tribes and Clans*.

³ According to legend Wanjare was the third brother who wandered and got lost among the Bantu Kisii; cf. BoNchari in Mayer, *The Lineage Principle in Gusii Society*.

⁴ Associated lineages.

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12 interpreted in the light of the relation between husband and wives, between co-wives themselves, and between groups of half-brothers in the compound polygynous family. Every group of uterine brothers with their mother forms a very distinct unit over against all other such units in the same compound family. These matrifocal cells of the compound family are all separate stock-owning and land-holding units, and their semi-autonomy is emphasized in the pattern of residence (see below, p. 17) and in the arrangements for cooking, eating, and other domestic activities. It is strikingly exhibited on ritual occasions (see below, pp. 35–7). Another indication is the fact that the Luo clearly remember the names of their ancestors' wives, whereas other peoples in the Luo-speaking group, such as the Alur, do not.

There is here no question of matrilineal principle intruding on an otherwise patrilineal system. The point is that uterine brothers have strong incentives for rivalry with and distinctness from half-brothers, and the pattern of social grouping thus engendered is passed on to their agnatic descendants, so that lineages with female eponyms may appear at any level of segmentation. They are groups of agnates defined by reference to their progenetrix because she alone can distinguish them from other groups of agnates descended from the same male ancestor. Since only a proportion of class B lineages ever become class A, the selection of class A lineages which have male and which have female eponyms follows no invariable principle, but depends on the particular context in which each one became a class A lineage (see below, pp. 38–43). Since co-wives represent subordinate segments in relation to their husbands but superordinate segments in relation to their sons, there is nothing to indicate that female eponyms are correlated with subordination and male eponyms with superordination in lineage activities.[1]

In most contexts of lineage activity it is possible to find on different occasions lineages with male eponyms acting as major segments of a superordinate with a female eponym, or vice versa, or major segments and superordinate both with female eponyms, or both with male, or even major segments some of whom have male and others female eponyms. However, most lineages which act politically as tribes (see Evans-Pritchard, 'Luo Tribes and Clans', p. 4) have male eponyms. Some exogamous lineages have female eponyms—as being groups of agnates who no longer maintain the ban on marriage with the descendants of co-wives of their progenetrix, because their distance in space and time permits forgetfulness of the bond between them. That on balance male eponyms occur more frequently than female may be due to the fact that while the structure of the family sometimes necessitates the use of female eponyms, there is sometimes a possibility of choice, and in a patrilineal society the choice would fall more readily on a male. Moreover, when spatial contiguity, and the social relations consequent upon it, no longer necessitates their recollection, and names have actually become very remote in time, there is rather more likelihood of forgetfulness of the names of ancestresses who are drawn from a multiplicity of different exogamous lineages than of the names of male ancestors who follow one another in an unbroken male line.

There are further reasons for describing lineage structure first at the level of the domestic and residential units and the smallest territorial settlements, rather than

[1] Cf. Fortes, op. cit., p. 32.

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by starting with the maximal lineages descended from the first-remembered ancestors. The position of these smalles groups on the lineage genealogy is not far removed from that of the present families, so that their interpretation by analogy with family composition is strengthened by the shortness of the time which has elapsed since the actual existence of the compound and elementary families from which they grew. This especially aids the interpretation of female lineage eponyms in relation to the structural position of co-wives in the family. Another advantage is that the segments of a lineage tend to engage the activity of their members in inverse frequency to their size; thus the business of the maximal lineage, though of great importance as being the largest scale of corporate action ever undertaken by lineages, is least frequent, while that of the minimal lineages absorbs the greatest proportion of their members' time. Consequently there will always be a greater quantity of observable behaviour relating to the minimal segments of a lineage than to any of the rest. Among a numerous people such as the Luo, without centralized political institutions, it may well be that the principles of small group organization are relatively uniform throughout, while description of the larger groups is complicated by their great variety of size and the differential effects of population growth, length of settlement, inter-lineage warfare, and the like. The smallest groups are, on the average, the most recent groups, and can therefore be dealt with in terms of observable activity or relatively well-remembered past events, whereas the history of the larger groups is less likely to be authentic and is more strongly moulded by myth. However, though genealogies and lineage traditions may be more properly regarded as expressions of social values than as historical records, they can hardly be irrelevant for the understanding of how lineages develop through time. Other things being equal, there must be a tendency for the maximal lineages of the present to be derived from the minimal lineages of the past, and for some among the minimal lineages of the present to form the source of the maximal lineages of the future.[1]

It is to be noted that not even genealogical segmentation can ever follow a regular pattern, since the number of wives a man marries, and the number of children of each sex whom he begets upon them, do not do so. When the increasing irregularities of growth between one line of descent and another over a long period are taken into account, it will easily be understood that lineage principles, which are necessarily stated in terms of regularities, suffer profound modifications in practice. As will be seen, the genealogical segmentation may be adhered to fairly strictly in ritual contexts and in their organizational background. In economic and political relations, however, the operative segmentation frequently diverges from the genealogical, but

[1] See Forde, *J.R.A.I.*, vol. lxviii, p. 8: 'particular ecological conditions appear to be prerequisite for extensive proliferation of unilineal kin and the formation of large and successively segmented clans. These appear to be the maintenance of social continuity over a widening series of territorial entities, a condition which requires both considerable physical mobility and facilities for continued territorial expansion.' Judging from the Luo, the maintenance of this social continuity is fundamental, and facilities for continued territorial expansion are more vital to it than physical mobility. The requisite mobility is ensured by the lineage ideology itself, which permits free visiting among kinsmen as long as they occupy a continuous territory. When the conditions for fairly rapid numerical and territorial expansion are not fulfilled, we should expect to find an increase of the fictional element in clanship and lineage organization, a synthesizing of discrete groups, and fictional genealogical unification. Probably Luo conditions until recently permitted an unusual congruity between actual and putative genealogies as a basis of social organization.

[text continues on p. 15]

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[p. 14]

PODHO
RAMOGI
Uyoma = (Uyoma location of Central Kavirondo, 15,646)
Kisumo = Awando (Kisumo location of Central Kavirondo, 26,319)
JOOK
CHIEN = Omieri
RACHUONYO = Nyalue = Nyajuok = Auma = Nyijir = Adhet
(Karachuonyo 44,830)
CHWANYA = ♂?
WANJARE (Wanjare location of the Bantu Kisii in South Kavirondo, 15,845)
SIPUL (Kasipul, 46,497)
♂? = ONYANGO RABALA
BUOCH (Kabuoch, 9,711)
ADEM (Kadem, 11,322)
BEWU = ♂?
RUNGU (Karungu, 4,943)
NYAMWA (Kanyamwa, 9,828)

Men shown in CAPITALS.
Women shown in *italics*.
——— Connects co-wives with husbands.

FIG. 2

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the divergences are glossed over and the relations of segments treated in the same kinship idiom as if the implied regularities had been maintained.

I now proceed to the more detailed description of those features of the Luo family which aid in the interpretation of the lineage system. The lineage concepts of the

FIG. 3

Luo are then discussed, and six cardinal principles abstracted from them. Some statistics are given to show the divergence of lineage activities from the norms implied in the concepts and from the genealogical structure itself. More details are given of the nature of segmentary activity within the extended family, between the extended families of whose members the smaller lineage segments are composed, and between the larger lineages. Lastly, an interpretation is given of the transformation of class B into class A segments as small landholding lineages, from which

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originate all the larger lineages which provide the political framework of Luo society.

My illustrations of Luo lineage structure are taken from material on one large lineage group, that of Karachuonyo. This group inhabits the present locations of Karachuonyo and Kasipul, and in 1947 had a population of 90,000. I lived here from December 1946 till March 1947 and again for the month of September 1947. On each occasion I took with me a Luo student from Makerere College as interpreter and research assistant. I went through my material with a dozen or more of the Luo students at Makerere who themselves came from a number of different locations. Clearly, from such a short period in the field, my results are not complete, but in so far as they add to the information at present available, I present them for what they are worth. The map (Fig. 3) shows all the Luo locations of South Kavirondo, those of the Karachuonyo group and of the other lineages which claim descent from the common ancestors, Jook and his wife Awandu, being shown in heavy type.

III. THE FAMILY

The most prominent cultural features of the Luo landscape are the euphorbia hedges, at stages of growth varying from that of 3-foot saplings to that of 30-foot trees, dating each site by their planting at the time of first occupation, and throwing a thick green wall round the cluster of huts within. This residential unit is the *dala* or *pacho*, and will be referred to as the homestead. The dwelling-huts ranged in a circle round the inside of the hedge are those of married women, the chief wife's hut being at the side opposite to the entrance through the hedge, and the huts of subsequent wives arranged in alternate succession on either side of that of the chief wife.[1] The husband and head of the homestead divides his time between the huts of his wives, the chief wife's hut taking precedence,[2] having no other quarters of his own except an *abila*, a smaller hut usually in the centre of the circle, which was his only place of privacy. There is a belief that if the husband leaves the homestead to escape from the bickering of his wives he will die on re-entering it, and the *abila* provides him with a safer sanctuary. It was also a vantage point from which he could keep a watchful eye on his cattle in the nearby kraal. The homestead is the spatial correlate of the compound polygynous family and is subdivided into the households of its component elementary families. Just as *dala* or *pacho* applies both figuratively to the social group and concretely to the homestead occupied by it, so *ot* applies both to house and to the household of wife and children occupying it. The title of the head of the homestead and its family group is *wuon dala* or *wuon pacho*; *jaduong* (elder) may be substituted for *wuon*. Correspondingly, each wife is *wuon ot*, signifying that she is head of the household, proprietress of its hut and all other effects, and leader of its domestic and economic activities. The word *wuon* is usually translated as 'father', and is in fact the classificatory term for all agnates of the generation senior to the speaker, including the 'genitor'. But its use with reference to all married women,

[1] See Gluckman in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. Radcliffe-Brown and Forde. The Luo family has a 'house-property complex' of the Zulu type but in a less extreme form.

[2] This is often striking in ritual. The husband's most valuable possessions are also kept there. With the present changes in hut design the chief wife's hut is often of the new and more pretentious rectangular pattern, while a second wife's may also be rectangular but smaller, and the third wife's still of the traditional circular type.

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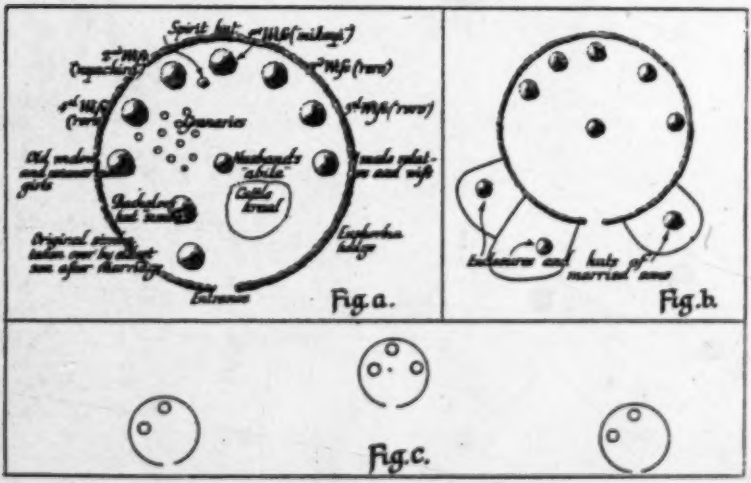
and in a number of other sociological contexts, suggests that its primary meaning is that of owner.[1] The title of the first wife is *mikayi*, that of the [illegible] and *nyachira*, and of all subsequent wives *ruru*.

The diagrams below show the plan of the homestead at [illegible] phases of the family cycle. The fuller details of Fig. *a* are omitted fro[illegible] figures. Taking the compound polygynous family as described abov[illegible] ary point of departure, the cycle might be charted thus:

PHASE 1. The compound polygynous family of husband, wives, and immature offspring.

2. The eldest son matures, marries, and at first lives with his wife in the original bachelors' hut (*simba*) while his younger brothers build a new one next to it. (Fig. *a*).



3. The eldest son eventually builds his wife a hut of her own outside his father's homestead hedge. His younger brothers marry and follow suit. Offspring are born to them, bringing into existence the compound polygynous grand family. (Fig. *b*.)

4. The sons marry subsidiary wives, gradually splitting off from the original homestead to form separate ones of their own. The head of the original homestead eventually dies, his widows are taken over by their stepsons or brothers-in-law, and the old homestead is in course of time deserted. There is now an extended family, with the eldest or ablest of the dead man's sons as head, the sons' homesteads now each having reached phase 1 of the cycle. (Fig. *c*.)

The head of the compound family is, of course, a member of each of its component elementary families, but the fact that he is common to them all gives each a certain independence in relation to him as well as to one another. The elementary family

[1] It is the possessive form of *nam* which has the meanings 'owner', 'father', 'grandsire'.

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is a most important grouping intermediate between the compound family and its individual members. It is a semi-autonomous domestic unit with its own kitchen economy, its own property rights in cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, land, tools, granaries, and food stocks. Correspondingly it is responsible for its own building and repairs, fuel and water collecting, food provision and allocation from harvest to harvest, and has its own ritual rights and obligations. But the husband is an element common to them all and, having his own rights and duties in respect of these matters, binds them closely together. Livestock are herded co-operatively, not only for all the elementary families of a homestead, but for several homesteads together. The husband is the titular head of a corporate group, not an absolute rightholder.[1] He allocates land, cattle, and other property accruing to the compound family group among its elementary families, and this allocation limits the proportion in which it will eventually be inherited by the sons in each elementary family. He is also able to make levies of property for special purposes from all his elementary families. But in all situations involving social groups wider than the homestead, its head is subject to the decisions of the leader-in-council of the lineage segment to which he belongs. The exclusiveness of elementary families is potentially high, but in practice depends on the skill of the homestead head in securing and maintaining harmony, and on the natural compatibility or otherwise of co-wives. When these factors favour, co-wives may be seen co-operating in many tasks, taking it in turns to supply the husband—or one another's children—with food, combining as a team for garden work, or sharing one another's water-supply. But it cannot be denied that the Luo regard friction between co-wives as being a more normal state of affairs. Behind these situational variations lies the invariable right of the husband to regular cooked food from each wife, of each wife to regular sexual attention from the husband, and the general responsibility of each elementary family for its own self-maintenance granted its rightful assistance from the husband in his proper part of each task.

The rearing of children is woven into this framework. The baby's first contacts are naturally with its mother, who may not finally wean it till it is about two years old, unless as a result of a subsequent pregnancy she has to do so sooner; for suckling a child with a younger sibling in the womb is regarded as robbing and endangering the latter. The baby sleeps in its mother's hut at night and sleeps and later plays near it during the day. It is most closely associated with the other members of its own elementary family, especially the female ones circling round the hearth for the preparation and cooking of food. Other members of the compound family will be hardly less well known from their presence together inside the homestead hedge, but all non-members of the homestead will be comparative strangers except very close relatives or near neighbours who are constant visitors within it.

Babies of either sex are soon each put in the charge of one of the older unmarried girls, probably a real or classificatory sister. This brings them in contact with the world outside the homestead, where a number of these nurse-girls (Dholuo *jepidi*) meet regularly in informal play groups. By the time children can run about on their own they too form play groups, including both girls and boys from several homesteads. Gradually the interests of the two sexes diverge, the boys going off with

[1] The Luo homestead in all phases of its life-cycle would remain the definition of a corporate group in Weber's sense. See *Theory of Political and Economic Organization*, p. 133.

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the herds and, by emulation of the age group next above them, slowly acquiring proficiency in the typical adult male pursuits, while the girls are drawn into the domestic tasks of the elementary family, food preparation and cooking, fetching water, and minding babies.

The young boys of a play group sleep together in the gost hut of a homestead when they no longer share their mother's hut at night. The girls sleep together in the hut of some widow of the group who is past childbearing age. This is the most important institution for the transmission of female culture. Girls only leave it at marriage, and till that time they are continuously trained in the adult roles expected of them. Boys at puberty build themselves bachelor huts (Dholuo *simbe*) in which they sleep and where they also entertain their girl friends. A group of young men makes a formal assignation with a group of nubile girls from a segment of another maximal lineage into which marriage is possible, and visits and entertainments are held to and from the one lineage territory to the other. The two groups pair off with one another into sex partnerships which last till the groupsbreak up and reform. A youth graduates out of this company of *simbe* age-mates at marriage.

Authority over children rests jointly with the parents. That of the mother is likely to be the most effective in the early years, and she always hods a strong sanction in her manipulation and control of the food-supply. The father is ultimately responsible for the order of the family, and his discipline is stronger than the mother's as the children grow older. There is a relation of friendly intimacy between alternate generations. Children are on easy terms with their grandparents and will certainly use the latters' households as an escape from home discipline or as a more generous source of food if need or opportunity arises. Children are at no period encouraged to live away from home with other relatives, but parents allow them to circulate freely among a number of homesteads wherever they find the best welcome and the most plentiful food, among families which are usually both neighbours and close agnatic relatives. Brother and sister have no material reasons for conflict and there is a strong and lasting bond of affection and reliance between them, institutionalized in the symbolism of a number of ritual occasions, and linked to their important later relation to one another's children as mother's brother (*mwa*) and father's sister (*nyar*). Apart from parents, these are the only two consanguine relatives of the first ascending generation who are picked out by special kinship terms. The newly married woman is under the authority of her mother-in-law, and a man's relation to his wife's parents is marked by deep respect and avoidances. Ritual practices as well as personal attitudes emphasize the importance of fertility and virility,[1] and the value attached by a man to a numerous offspring and the ability of his wives to provide it. The Luo are aware of the male and female parts in procreation, but say that 'the woman's blood goes for nothing'. This seems a necessary inference from the nature of lineage organization rather than vice versa, for they would not argue that there is any tendency for children to resemble the father rather than the mother, nor do they permit marriage with close consanguine kin though of an unrelated lineage. It is

[1] e.g. the special rites which have to be carried out for a unbile girl dying unmarried, a wife dying without children, a widow dying before remarriage, a man dying when one of his wives is still childless, or a [illegible] dying before he has experienced sexual [illegible] the latter being treated similarly to a [illegible].

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842 said that since property has passed to the lineage of a wife it has no claim on her offspring, consequently they take their father's lineage affiliation and can always be claimed by him because they result from his semen.

595 The Luo conceptualization of primary kinship attitudes is in conformity with the patterns of actual behaviour briefly outlined. The relation of co-wives is visualized as one of jealous rivalry. The term for it in Dholuo is *nyiego* and co-wives refer to one another as *nyieka*.[1] From co-wives themselves this relationship tends to spread to the elementary families of which they are the female heads. Children stick up for their mother's rights over against those of a stepmother. They stand to gain all round from successful competition with the other elementary families of their homestead. This is not of great permanent importance to the daughters, but the sons have everything that is worth while to gain or lose in their rivalry with the groups [428] of their half-brothers. Their inheritance of the most valuable and essential property—livestock and land—depends on the allocation made by their father between the elementary families. But for uterine brothers it also depends on the allocation made between them within their elementary family. Consequently uterine brothers have material reasons for competing with one another, and also for combining together to compete with all other groups of uterine brothers in their compound family, being reinforced in this solidarity by the coincidence of their mother's interests against her co-wives. These pivotal relationships within household and homestead are conceptualized by the Luo as the origin of lineage structure. It might be objected that the orientations noted here are of a kind which naturally tend to be latent in any polygynous family system. The point is, however, that such orientations not only occur in the Luo family but are expected to occur; that the pattern of residence, the kinship terminology, the general conduct of family affairs, and the usual behaviour of its members all reflect this particular alinement rather than any other of a number of alinements possible in polygynous families, and are consciously thought to do so.[2] The main features are represented diagrammatically below (see p. 21).

000 It is impossible, within the space of this article, to give a full account of marriage types and contracts, the system of inheritance and of succession to property and authority, exogamy, blood-feuds, ancestor worship, and the like. All these matters have a bearing on lineage organization, and I try to give here a brief general account of them, sufficient only to make clear the nature of their connexion with the other material presented.[3]

613 582 Exogamy is an attribute of the maximal lineage.[4] This study is mainly concerned

[1] *nyiego* v., to snatch suddenly, or take by surprise; *nyiego* n., the relation of co-wives, jealousy; *nyieka* n., my co-wife, my partner in jealousy.

[171] [2] In fact there are great similarities in this respect with the family structure of the Kikuyu, Kamba, and other East African peoples, but unfortunately the material on them does not tell us to what extent it is reflected in their lineage systems. Compare also Meyer, op. cit., p. 6. The most valuable comparative treatment of family structure from this angle is that of Fortes, *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, esp. iii, and *The Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 155–6 note and p. 198.

[3] For further details see Paul Mboya, 'Luo Kitgi gi Timbegi' (*East African Standard*, Nairobi), an English translation of which is to be published under the auspices of the East Africa Literature Bureau. See also Evans-Pritchard, 'Marriage Customs of the Luo of Kenya', *Africa*, vol. III, 1930, p. 132.

[4] A Luo maximal lineage, as the most inclusive agnatic descent group based on an accepted and putatively continuous genealogy, may coincide with 'clan', or it may be a segment within it where clan refers to a group united by a sentiment of common descent without this explicit genealogical basis.

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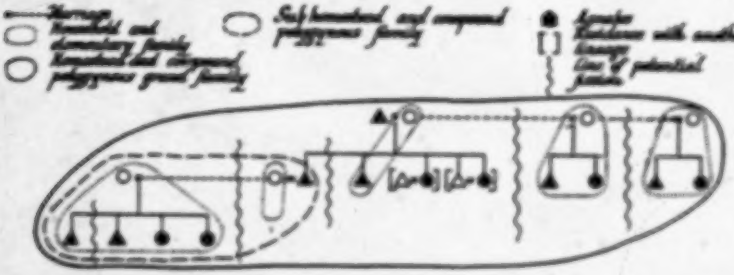
with one maximal lineage, which includes the lineage segments whose territories are marked on the map (Fig. 3) as the locations of Karachuonyo, Kasipul, Kabuoch, Kanyamwa, Karungu, and Kadem.[1] These lineages all claim patrilineal descent by a recognized genealogy from Awandu the wife of Jook, an ancestor from nine to twelve generations of ascent from elders still alive. This is an exceptionally large exogamous group and has no parallel even among the Luo, with their very wide tracing of marriage bars. Its present population is about 120,000, including a small percentage of settlers (*jodak*) from other lineages. The ban on intermarriage is still observed throughout this group except for the *jodak*. Its major segments would



probably have separated from one another completely and ceased to claim effective common descent, if it had not been for the tendency of European administration to crystallize the relations of maximal lineages at about the stage they had reached when outside control was first imposed over half a century ago. Since that time the population of the group has probably doubled to reach its present size. It is regarded by all the Luo as one of the most important and most authentically Luo groups among them. Since, as the map shows, the territories of its major segments are not contiguous, but form three separate blocks, their day-to-day activities have become similarly divided; I deal chiefly with the block formed by the locations of Karachuonyo and Kasipul, which have a population of 90,000. The lineages of both these locations claim agnatic descent from Rachuonyo, and will be referred to together as Karachuonyo. (They were, in fact, called East and West Karachuonyo by the British administration until recently.) Karachuonyo people can intermarry with the lineages of the surrounding locations—Nyakach, Gem, Kanyada, and Kagan (see map, Fig. 3)—as well as with the groups of *jodak* who have been permitted by them to settle within their territory.[2]

Cases of murder between Karachuonyo and other lineages would—before the British administration—have occasioned blood-feuds between them in which the

[1] Wanjare is also included, but these people separated from the Luo and were incorporated into the Bantu Kisii.

[2] There are only three considerable groups in Karachuonyo which are not agnatic descendants of Rachuonyo: Kanyadhiang' (1155), Wagwe (1754), and Kanwada (400); see Fig. 1. Traditions accounts for them as descended either from wanderers who became dependants of Karachuonyo families or from orphan castaways discovered and reared by them. In either case they exercised Karachuonyo gods, as is almost inevitable in a system of localized exogamous lineages. They therefore rank as sister's son's lineages to Karachuonyo.

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lineage of the murdered man endeavoured to kill a member of the murderer's lineage in revenge. But the family of the murderer could forestall this process by offering a girl or twelve head of cattle in compensation. If wilful murder occurs between segments within the same maximal lineage, fighting may again occur and a member of the murderer's segment be killed in revenge. Here it is impossible for a girl of the group to be offered in compensation since she would be of the same maximal lineage and exogamous group as the murdered man, and could not be married by any kinsman of his. But the senior elder recognized by both segments calls a council representative of both, and the murderer, if judged guilty, is supposed to be exiled. When a man kills a close relative, belonging to his own minimal class A segment of the maximal lineage, it is *nuru*—a ritual offence.[1] The murderer must bury his relative and stay by the grave until *chulo* (the first mourning period) is finished. He must cohabit with the dead man's wife, if she has borne no children to her husband, so that she may bear a child to be named after the dead and to guard his homestead.[2]

The level of groups between which marriage can take place thus corresponds to the level at which general relations cease to be those prescribed between kinsmen, and the groups with which marriage is possible tend to be those between which hostility in the usual attitude. The Luo recognize this correlation, and regard *ode* (in-laws) and *nuoje* (enemies) as almost interchangeable terms.

The normal form of marriage is negotiated by go-betweens on behalf of bride and bridegroom with their respective families. A transfer of cattle has to be made to the bride's family, the normal number being twelve. When the two families are agreed as to the suitability of the match, the groom arranges for a party of his friends to drag the bride from her home. The bride is expected to make a show of resistance and weeping, but it is significant that the dragging must not take place when the bride's parents are absent from the homestead. After the bride is thus brought to the *simbo* of the groom, the latter deflowers her in the presence of married men and women witnesses; the tokens of her virginity are placed on pestheads and paraded in triumph to the bride's home the next day and a feast is held there. If the bride fails to prove her virginity in this way no feast is held, and one head of cattle less is paid to her family. The real commencement of a marriage is said to be the groom's sending of *ruok kode* (the 'heifer of the stick'), which goes to the bride's mother, and a bull to her father. Then comes the main payment, varying according to the wealth of the two parties and to the general level of Luo wealth in cattle at the time, but usually eight upwards. After this bride and groom live together for some time in the latter's *simbo*, and then the bride gets permission to return to her own home. The groom goes there with a heifer and a bull, and the feast of *Ariewo* is held. This completes the customary twelve cattle of the bridewealth. Bride and groom then return

[1] Some examination of actual cases would be required to discover how far the level of segment within which murder is treated in this way coincides with that within which widows of kinsmen may be inherited and assistance given in marriage payments. My own data are short for the collection of such statistics, but my impression was that such a coincidence is very vague, and it is certainly not consistently present in the minds of the Luo.

[2] Cf. Evans-Pritchard, *Some Aspects of Marriage and the Family among the Nuer*, pp. 7–10. Chapter iv (superseded among the Nuer, the obligations of glever marriage to her dead maternal cousin) follows principles. Among the Luo-speaking group it is not practised by the Kavirondo Luo nor by the Alur nor, probably, the Acholi.

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to his home and continue to live in the *simbu*, the bride not cooking on her own, but in the veranda of her mother-in-law's hut, and her food not being eaten by her husband (who continues to eat his mother's food) but only by the young men. Later still the ceremony of *rire* is performed, which is considered a final confirmation of the marriage contract by the two families. However, further ceremonies follow, in which the husband gives his father-in-law the bull of *ulwé* and his mother-in-law the goat of *nwe rimulu*. Then the father-in-law settles upon his daughter the heifer of *simbu*, a bull, two goats, and a hoe, in token that he now gives up all claim upon his daughter so long as the marriage continues. Eventually husband and wife move out of the *simbu* into a new hut built for her by him, and she begins to cook on her own and he to eat her food. The sequence of ceremonies associated with marriage is thus complicated and protracted. There is no specified time schedule, but the bride may have given birth several times before they are concluded. 586

Less prestige attaches to the form of marriage contracted by a man and woman without prior formal approval from their respective families. This occurred in the past if a girl was made pregnant in the *simbu* and was sent straight to her lover, or on the elopement of a married woman with her adulterer, or on the remarriage of a divorced woman. This type of marriage is becoming very common today, where adherence to traditional ritual is lax, and where the young are able with impunity to short-cut both the tedious formalities and the great expenses of the more approved form of marriage. In this form of marriage cattle are still claimed by the bride's father, or by the former husband in the case of divorce and remarriage, but they are fewer in number. The essential differences from the first type of marriage are that the bride loses her virginity before any sort of marriage negotiation has taken place between the two families, and the contract eventually made between them is a recognition of a *fait accompli* instead of the careful planning of a mutually approved match. 583 [659] [78]

A dead man's widows are normally taken up by his kinsmen at the final ceremonies of the funeral, a year or more after the death. These kinsmen are nearly always husband's brothers or stepsons to the widows and they would certainly never be kinsmen from outside the dead man's minimal clan A lineage; but the Lese do not consciously relate the matter of widow inheritance to a specific grade of lineage. Among their husband's close kinsmen widows are allowed considerable freedom of choice. It was considered desirable that a man should replace a wife who had died, or a wife who was barren, by a sister of hers, which he could usually do for an amount of bridewealth far smaller than that of the original marriage. Ritual offences rather than infidelities were considered grounds for divorce. If the wife was judged guilty the husband claimed back the bridewealth cattle, less deductions of one head for the wife's work during the marriage, two for each girl, and three for each boy born of it, and others to replace those consumed in the marriage ceremonies. But if the husband was at fault he might be prevented from claiming any cattle back by a brother demanding the woman in his stead. 587 58

As has been stated, the cattle of a homestead are all herded together, but there are clearly recognized divisions in the ownership of the herd. There are three main categories: the cattle owned by the father, the cattle owned by his wives, and the cattle held in trust by them for the marriages of their sons. Through the father cannot interfere with the two latter categories except by agreement, he is regarded some the 422

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less as titular owner of the whole herd. The scheme of division may be represented as in the diagram below. All other livestock is divided in the same way. The eldest son of the first wife must marry before any other sons can do so, and if the first wife has no sons the rest must wait till there is no further chance of her bearing any. When the first wife dies, the second wife becomes chief wife of the homestead, but a first wife's full status can only be succeeded to when she is replaced by a sister and a new homestead is built. The property of a barren wife is inherited by a stepson who is adopted into her household to do the man's work in it.

CATTLE HERD

All herded together

Head of homestead titular owner of all

Cattle of the shrine
Entire property of homestead head.

Used to help sons or brothers' sons to marry, or to marry new wives for homestead head.

Residue ultimately inherited by the youngest son of the homestead, who also takes the father's share of cattle from any subsequent marriages of sisters.

All derived from the heifer and bull taken by the father at every daughter's marriage, and from their increase.

Milk from these used by the homestead head.

Cattle of the wives' houses
Minor to subject, next to spoken, one among one wives.

1. Cattle entirely property of the wives.

Ultimately inherited by youngest son of each house.

All derived from the heifer called *rath kode* received by the mother at each daughter's marriage, and from the heifer of *ombo* and bull settled upon a wife by her father at the end of her marriage ceremonies.

Milk from these used by the wives.

3. Cattle held for sons' marriages.

Any residue inherited by youngest son of each house.

All derived from the cattle received as daughters' marriages other than those specified under 1 and 2.

Homestead head has over all discretion in the original division of surviving cattle, and can persuade wives to give up cattle from category 3 to help stepsons to marry, and may by agreement take an extra heifer from those received as a daughter's marriage, to complete the bridewealth of one of his other wives.

Succession to authority in the family, and also in the lineage, depends on a combination of these qualifications: primogeniture, personal suitability in character and wealth, and appointment by one's predecessor. Primogeniture is highly regarded and preferred, but is never an absolute rule. Whenever an eldest son is unsuitable, or another agnatic relative is clearly more suitable, the latter is chosen to succeed. But a successor must be named by his predecessor, and as a result of the strong common sentiments in family and lineage segment, the predecessor's appointee seems usually to have been the one whom the elders of the group wish to elect when they meet at the funeral of the predecessor to confirm his choice.

Ancestor worship is falling into abeyance among the Luo of today. All those who go to school become at least nominal Christians, and this affects most of the young, while the old are becoming diffident in the performance of rites which no longer command universal respect. The spirit shrines which used to be placed between the first and second wives' huts are hardly seen today, nor the three stones which used to stand before the spirit shrine, with the stone of sacrifice buried beneath (see

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diagram, p. 17). It is therefore difficult to give a precise account of the relation between ancestor worship and lineage formation. It is noteworthy, however, that the ritual formula at a sacrifice was not spoken by any particular descendant of the recipient of sacrifice, but by any elders of his lineage present, who repeated it in turn while waiting for the sacrificial bull to urinate or excrete. If it refused to do this it was rejected and another substituted, and it was the elder who was repeating the formula at the moment when the bull urinated or excreted who had to make the sacrifice. The usual formula was *wuowu, kung' wuon wikowo*—'our father, call your father and eat'—followed by the bidding of a blessing on the particular matter in hand. In the funeral ritual more emphasis seems to be laid on insulating the living from the ill will of the dead than on securing the status of the latter in the other world. Similarly at any sacrifice, ancestors called to share are bidden to give the blessings for which they are asked on pain of being jeered at and despised. Children may be named, according to the father's judgement, after various circumstances or persons linked with the child's birth or ascertained in dreams. But if the child cries unusually the diviner (*ajuoga*) is called to discover which ancestor is seeking to have the child named after it. In this way the child may be named after its own father or mother, or any other relative, male or female. The same group of names tends to occur frequently in converging lines of ascent, especially those of famous ancestors, which are repeated particularly often, but there is no regular belief in the necessary reincarnation of ancestors in alternate generations.

IV. LINEAGE CONCEPTS

The special terms which the Luo use for lineages show the distinctions which they make between different aspects of the activity of these groups. Frequently all these terms may be applied to the same group on different occasions depending on the context. The most important of these terms are *dhoot*, *gweng'*, *likambo*, and *anyuola*. *Gweng'* and *dhoot* are used of class A segments only, *anyuola* of class B segments only, and *likambo* may be used of either. The use of these terms is always logical when interpreted in relation to the structural position of the speaker, but their etymology does not always seem consistent with this unless it is understood in a symbolic sense. It may be best to give a general account of the usage and etymology of each one, followed by some quotations from informants.

Dhoot (pl. *dhoodi*) is used for all those lineages which are corporate landholding units. They are the lineages already referred to as class A. Some idea of the variations in their size and population is given in the population figures included in Figs. 1 and 2, and the maps (Figs. 3, 4, and 5). They carry general social functions. Each manages its political, jural, economic, ritual, and other affairs through a council of elders representing its major segments and recognizing one of their number as leader. Organized on a territorial basis, they are the units of primary settlement or multiples of them,[1] responsible for the acquisition, apportionment, and use of land. They are the basis of a whole series of corporate group activities ranging from

[1] By settlement I mean simply a defined area of territory, containing the dwellings and all the land resources of a specified social group. The Luo have no villages in the sense of recognized aggregations of dwellings larger than those of the family.

[text continues on p. 27]

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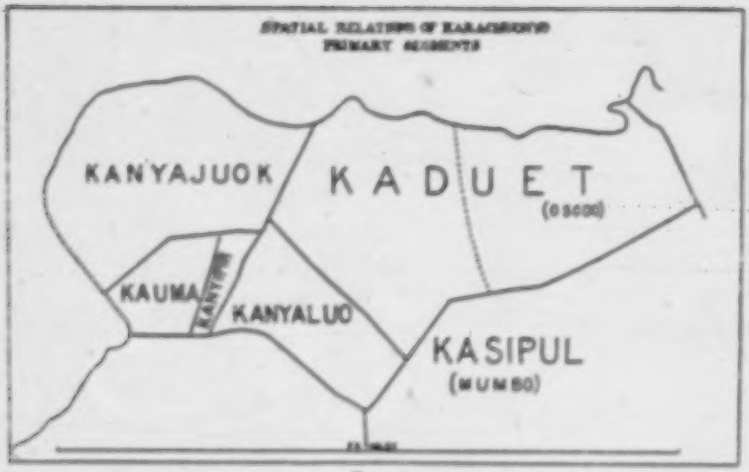

Fig. 4

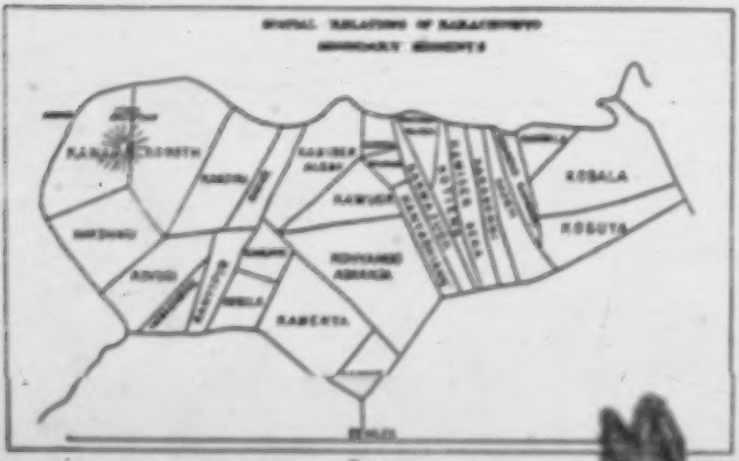

Fig. 3

[p. 26]

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friendly games of *adhula* (Luo hockey) between the smaller segments, through the wrestling and club-fighting of medium segments to the ritual warfare and open conflict of the larger lineages. Etymologically *dhoot* means 'mouth of house' (*dhok*, mouth; *ot*, house) and, as quotations will show, often refers to the issue of children from the doorway of their mother's hut. This might further imply a principle of matrilineal descent, but of this there is not the slightest trace among the Luo. All their lineages are essentially patrilineal, but the original ancestors from whom they spring, and whose names they bear, may be either men or women, depending on whether segmentation took place between brothers of an elementary family or co-wives of a compound family. The significance of this etymology, and of the Luo interpretation of it, seems to be that the unity of uterine brothers in their mother's house is to them symbolic of the solidarity of members of the same *dhoot*. But, as has been previously noted, uterine brothers are also regarded from the opposite point of view, as symbolic in their quarrels of the fission between lineage segments. Nor is this inconsistent, but is in line with the character of all Luo lineage segments, which in one context emphasize their unity against all outsiders and in another their internal divisions.

The *dhoot* of Karachuonyo is to its members the largest lineage which carries general social functions and which occupies one continuous block of territory. It is subdivided into smaller *dhoodi* down to the level of those which are the primary settlement units. This is the class A system of segmentation which, as previously noted, may be from twofold to sixfold, and is usually fivefold in Karachuonyo, according to the particular agnatic line taken. The points of origin of these *dhoodi* are only a small selection from the very large number of points of potential segmentation which appear in the whole genealogy of Karachuonyo (see large genealogical chart, Fig. 6, facing p. 32). For all uterine brothers, or co-wives with surviving male agnatic issue, from those of living families back to the earliest ancestors of the genealogy, represent points of fission in the class B segmentation, some of which have achieved class A status as *dhoodi*.

Karachuonyo as a *dhoot* is thus a group of people claiming common agnatic descent from Rachuonyo and subdivided at several successive levels into a number of smaller *dhoodi* all segmentally articulated. Karachuonyo as a continuous block of territory occupied and controlled by this group is also correspondingly subdivided, so that the arrangement of parts into a whole coincides in both cases. It is when they have the territorial aspect of a *dhoot* particularly in mind that the Luo refer to it as *gweng'* (pl. *gweng'*). The basic connotation is land, but the social group occupying the land is always implicit in the term *gweng'*. It would never be used for unclaimed or unoccupied land, which is *thim* (wilderness). Settlement, in the sense defined above is thus a reasonable translation of *gweng'*. In Karachuonyo all *gweng'* are thought of as being essentially lineage settlements. When the Luo have a territorial unit in mind as being the most inclusive of its kind, as they do in the case of Karachuonyo itself and occasionally in some contexts the *dhoodi* which are its major segments also, they refer to them as *piny* (country) rather than *gweng'*. The average population of minimal *gweng'* is approximately 300.

Dhoodi, which are major segments of the same superordinate lineage, refer to one another as *ikwaka* (pl. *ikwaka*). The etymology of this word is uncertain, and it

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601 may be of Bantu origin. The facility with which the Luo incorporate linguistic
613 borrowings even in the case of fundamental concepts (e.g. *Nyasaye*, God; *wasiga*, enemies, &c.) is in marked contrast to the persistence with which they have retained the other elements of their culture and imposed them on the non-Luo groups assimi-
[578] lated by them. The Luo sum up in the term *lihamba* all those forces of friction and competition which weaken the solidarity of a lineage segment and lead to its further subdivision. The quarrels of uterine brothers and the jealousies of co-wives are regarded as typical of these. A *lihamba* is, then, a rival lineage segment co-ordinate to one's own. When a man speaks of his *lihamba* he always means a segment other than his own, but included in the same superordinate segment as is the one he has in mind as claiming his loyalty at that particular moment. It is those groups of *dhoudi* which stand in the *lihamba* relationship to one another which play together at *adhula*, wrestle together, and fight together with clubs.[1]

613 The lineages of class B remain passive except when called into action in connexion with certain ritual situations, and the chance of this occurring depends mainly on their genealogical position. Those which are below the level of the minimal *dhoot* and *gweng'*, down to and including the members of compound and elementary families, are constantly being involved as groups in the many rituals which accompany marriages and funerals, the founding of new homesteads, the starting of cultivation, sowing and reaping, and the organization of other periodic affairs within the minimal *gweng'*. The class B segments above this level only come into action haphazardly according to the incidence of ancestral sacrifices. When any social group is faced with a mis-
613 fortune for which no specific remedy is recognized, a diviner (*ajuoga*) is consulted,
769 and sacrifice made to the patrilineal ancestor indicated as responsible for the trouble.
782 Which one is selected depends on the gravity of the misfortune and the level of lineage grouping affected by it. The diviner is most likely to indicate one of the eponymous ancestors of *dhoudi* as they are most prominent in the minds of all. If, however, the eponymous ancestor of any other segment is indicated, it would emerge from its passivity into action. Even when it is the eponymous ancestor of a *dhoot* who receives sacrifice, some or all of its genealogical co-ordinates and subordinates may only be class B segments, and these would be called into action on such occasions since the sacrificing segment usually calls its co-ordinates to participate and is itself represented by its major segments.[2] All class B segments acting in this way, whether below or above the level of the minimal *dhoot*, are called *anyuola*. Even a segment which is itself a *dhoot* and *gweng'* may be called *anyuola* in this context. The etymology of this word[3] might well suggest a uterine principle of grouping. However, as with *dhoot*, every *anyuola* is a patrilineal descent group, and whether it takes
613 its name from a man or a woman depends on the genealogical incidence of co-wives and uterine brothers and the circumstances which call into action the agnatic groups

[1] Cf. the Talmud concept of *amoré* (Fortes, *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 54, 55, 60). Here, too, there is the idea of a reciprocal relationship between co-ordinates, but to the Talmud the chief emphasis is on the bond of unity resulting from ancestral brotherhood, whereas for the Luo it is on competitive subordination within a common superordinate. Co-ordinate segments are equally *lihamba* to one another whether their eponymous wives are co-wives or uterine brothers.

[2] See below, p. 55. Cf. Fortes's analysis of the same principle among the Talmud (*The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, p. 51).

[3] *nyuol* n., birth; *nyuolo* v., to give birth. But it is possible to apply this root to procreation by man.

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derived from them. Here again it seems as if a whole series of groups were identified with one symbolic prototype, and the ideational qualities of the elementary family cell of mother and children are extended to much larger and differently derived groupings organized upon similar principles of solidarity. When *oyuolo* groups act in co-ordinate relationships they also may refer to one another as *libamba* in the same way as is done by *dhoudi*. But in the co-ordinate relationships of such class B *libembini* the competitive element is not so marked as the ordered marshalling of articulated segments in the achievement of a common purpose. Competitiveness still appears, however, in the haggling over shares of meat distributed at many rites.

Besides these generic terms lineages are referred to in particular by adding the prefix *ka* to the name of the eponymous ancestor. A lineage is said to be *Jokang'at'ackiel* —people of one person—and a man's lineage affiliation is indicated by adding the personal prefix and the locative prefix to the lineage name, as *Jakaruchuonyo*—a man of the lineage of Rachuonyo.[1] Luo paraphrase *ka* as *pacho* of so-and-so, using *pacho* in its figurative sense of the social group associated with a homestead; also, with their characteristic relativity, it can refer not merely to an actual homestead and its family, but to any lineage settlement however large, since all such must in theory be ultimately derived from the original homestead in which the eponymous ancestor lived.

Asked for the meaning of *dhoot* an elder usually leans back on his stool and points round the homestead at the doorways of his wives' huts as the concrete demonstration of what he says. Thus:

Obuya-Mboya of Konyango Adhanja:[2] 'If you have three wives and each has a number of children, and the children with their mothers scatter to different homesteads, they drop your name and take their mothers'.' Obuya-Mboya is a great-grandson of Onyango Adhanja by his first wife Ambogo Nyamagari. As may be seen from the chart (Fig. 6) Onyango Adhanja (93) had three other wives besides Obuya's ancestress, and the descendants of all these have actually made separate settlements of their own called Kanyandiero, Kanyajwang', and Kobala, after these three wives. Obuya had also been speaking of his grandfather Minguua, whose descendants also have their own settlement, and saying that as Kaminguua grew he would expect it to split up into three settlements named after Minguua's three wives.

Oyugi-Mboya of Kanyariro said of *dhoot*: 'You get your *dhoot* first from your mother, then it changes in the grandchildren to the father. It is just a question of naming you after the mother from whom you were born.' Oyugi is a great-great-grandson of Nyariro (85), first wife of Ogweno (82) (Fig. 6). He refers to the fact that the elementary family of the mother's hut is the primary unit in the system of segmentation, within the secondary grouping of descent from a man by all his wives taken together. Derivation from father or mother may alternate in different generations, and where segments are derived from women it is simply a naming device for distinguishing between descent groups all of which are patrilineal, not the result of any special value attached to descent from women as opposed to men.

[1] *ja*, pl. *jo*, personal prefix, *ng'ama*, a person; *ka*, prefix of place; *achiel*, one.

[2] I hyphenate a second name to the first when it is the name of the individual's father; when it is the individual's nickname or a woman's pet-name I add it without a hyphen. In either case, the addition of the second name serves to distinguish between the many individuals who have the same personal name.

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613 Oyugi also said: 'A *dhoot* begins when the sons of one wife leave their father's *dala*, form a *dhoot*, and begin to compete.' It is this competition which sharpens the boundaries, ideological as well as physical, between *dhoudi* and strengthens their internal solidarity. Oyugi's own lineage illustrates his point with the separation of the descendants of Nyariro from those of her co-wife Gaya (84) (Fig. 6).

Obware-Akoko of Kamboya said of *libamba*: 'A man can produce two sons; those two usually, according to custom, leave their father's homestead and make their own near by. Each of them will produce sons and daughters; at one time there might happen a quarrel or disagreement, then one will say to the other: "Now you go away from me since now you are a *libamba* by yourself, and I am a *libamba*." So you find each multiplying and becoming a *libamba* on either side. *Libamba* is not used except when there is a quarrel. Usually a quarrel comes in dividing the bride cattle of a girl or girls when married, when in spite of the old man's distribution the sons dispute it.' Then he referred to his own *dhoot* of Kamboya and said that it had no quarrels and therefore no *libembini* within it, because it is *pacho achiel*—a single homestead (figuratively, of course, for in fact it contains several dozen homesteads, and the original homestead of Mboya himself was probably deserted a century or so ago); but informally even two uterine brothers in a household can quarrel and one say to the other, 'you are my *libamba*'. Obware is a great-great-grandson of Mboya (98). The process of segmentation in his own lineage bears out his account of *libamba*, both in the separation of the descendants of Mboya from those of Omolo (100), and at the next level in the separation between Ogembo (91) and Onyango Adhanja (Fig. 6).

Oyugi-Mboya also said of *libamba*: '*Libamba* starts with quarrels between children of one wife and children of another.' This again follows the structure of his own lineage in the separation of the descendants of his ancestress Nyariro from those of her co-wife Gaya (84) (Fig. 6).

These statements, though at first confusing when taken together, do embody the cardinal principles of Luo lineage structure, and present some of the striking characteristics of Luo thought. This could be confirmed by many further quotations for which there is no room here. The main points may be summarized as follows:

1. *Derivation*

The eponymous ancestor of a lineage may be either a man or a woman.[1]

[170] [1] Contrast the discussion of male and female eponyms among the Arabs in Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 28–36. Clearly the Arabian situation was different from that of the Luo. Female eponyms were only found among the earliest ancestors, and in every tribe which had a female eponym those of all its segments were male. By contrast, female eponyms appear at all levels in different Luo lineages, interspersed with male, and the reasons for it are deducible from a study of recent cases of lineage fission (see pp. 40 et seq.). Robertson Smith did not admit the relevance of present residential arrangements and pivotal family relationships to the development of future lineage segments, or that the relations of persons within a family may in a very significant way be mirrored by the relations of large descent groups within a territorial unit. He suggests as a law of general validity that 'where the bond of maternity is so strong that it binds together the children of the same mother as a distinct kindred group against the other children of their father, there also we may be sure that the children of one mother by different fathers will hold together and not follow their father. And this is the principle of female kinship.' Both these situations can be demonstrated over and over again in Luo lineage structure, yet the Luo lineages are strictly unilateral in descent on the father's side. The application of terms whose ety-

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2. *Constitution*

The solidarity of the lineage (*dhoot*) is likened to that of the mother and her children in an elementary family.

3. *Interrelation*

The relation of one co-ordinate segment with another (*libamba*) is likened to the competition between uterine brothers, and to the competition between the sons of one co-wife and the sons of another.

4. *Personalization*

Lineage segments are so closely identified conceptually with the individuals and family nuclei from which they are descended that the latter stand for the former in linguistic idiom.

5. *Compression*

The symbolizing of lineage processes in certain relations between the members of elementary and compound families in the homestead leads to:

(*a*) Telescoping of the time sequence. Changes in lineage structure which took place a number of generations back and over a considerable period are treated as events among individuals of a family in an undifferentiated present.

(*b*) Telescoping of spatial distance. Relations between large social groups or territorial sections are treated as occurrences within single households and homesteads.

6. *Egocentricity*

Lineages are spoken of in the context of the structural position of the speaker, and utterances about them can only be interpreted in this light.

V. NORM AND DEVIATION IN THE SEGMENTARY SYSTEM

GENEALOGICAL segmentation can only be adhered to with absolute consistency as a dominant principle of social organization in situations which allow the irregularities of lineage growth and their consequences to be ignored. On the whole, ritual situations conform to this requirement, whereas political, economic, and many other general social needs frequently do not. The result of this is that in Luo lineage organization it is the *oyuolo* groups of the class B system of segmentation that are able to conform most closely to the abstract principles suggested by their genealogical

mology implies derivation from females to groups derived from male ancestors is taken by Robertson Smith as conclusive evidence for a switch from matrilineal to patrilineal descent. Among the Luo the inference from both social action and traditional theory is that terms such as *dhoot* and *oyuolo*, whose etymology suggests descent from a woman, are applied sometimes to groups with female and sometimes to those with male eponyms because groups of both types are identical in social function, and both alike reflect the cardinal attributes of these terms as shown in those situations which Luo adduce as symbolic demonstrations of their significance.

The *ruoth* and *nyaseke* (mother- and father-derived groups) of the Ilo are likely to afford an important comparative example, though the data on them are at present inadequate. It will be of great interest to know the real significance, for the social structure and for the process of segmentation, of these groups when they are fully analysed.

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613 structure, whereas the activities of the *dhoot* and *gweng'* groups of the class A segmentation frequently diverge from them. The *anyuola* groups within the minimal *dhoot*, being those of the least generation depth, have not existed long enough for the disparity of growth in different lines to become excessive, and this makes it easy for their activities to be consistently based on principles of genealogical segmentation. The class B segments above this level emerge only in ritual activity, in which disparity of size may be immaterial because the real balance of power of social groups is not an insistent factor on such occasions. But in the operations of *dhoot* and *gweng'* the balance of power between groups is usually a fundamental element, and often the consciously predominating one. It is none the less true that, despite divergences in practice, the Luo do regard the mechanism of genealogical segmentation as the normal organizational basis of the relations of social groups. When actual practice conforms to this it is regarded as natural; when it departs from it the divergence is glossed over, and the relationships are described in the same idiom as if conformity had been maintained. Luo lineage principles must, therefore, like other social norms, be looked for both in the activities of lineage segments, where significant variations about the norm may be revealed, and also in the theoretical recognition which they have in the minds of the people, as part of their 'projective system' revealed in their verbal behaviour, and here they may present a regularity and consistency which is otherwise impossible in social action.

These practical divergences from lineage theory may be made clearer by showing the distribution of class A and class B segments and the co-ordinate relationships of *libambini* on an actual genealogy. The chart (Fig. 6) shows certain parts of the genealogy of Karachuonyo. It includes only ancestors belonging to generations already dead, the most recent one shown being Omolo (100), who is separated from the living head of Komolo by one intervening generation. Each of the following is the eponymous ancestor of a *dhoot* in the class A segmentation. Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 24, 25, 28, 29, 32, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 51, 59, 60, 62, 65, 67, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86, 87, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101. These may now be divided into those which follow the *libambo* principle as recognized by the Luo in theory and those which do not. That is to say, those *dhoodi* which are co-ordinate segments according to their genealogy, and those which are not genealogically co-ordinate although they act as if they were.

Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 are co-ordinates, their superordinate being No. 3.
39, 40 " " " 34.
42, 43 " " " 44.
77, 78, 79, 80 " " " 81.
94, 95, 96, 97 " " " 93.
98, 100 " " " 92.
99, 101 " " " 100.

But,

Nos. 25, 60, 28, 13, 14 are not co-ordinates, though they are major segments of *dhoot* 4.
35, 29, 44, 32 " " " " 5.
34, 36, 24, 59, 75, 76, 81, 82, 83, 86, 87 are not co-ordinates, though they are major segments of *dhoot* 8.

It is to be noted that the following *dhoodi* (Nos. 25 and 60, 9 and 4, 44 and 29, 62

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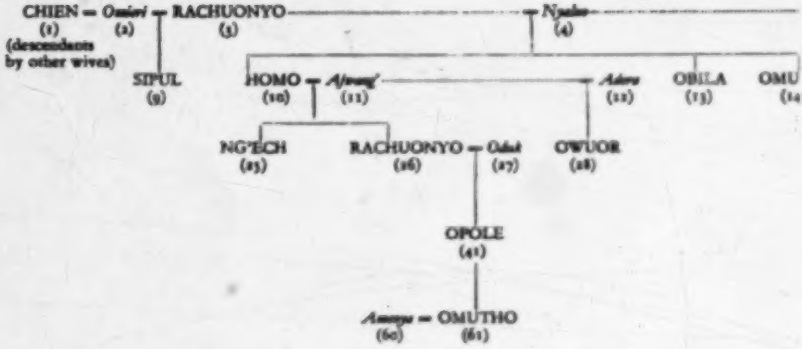
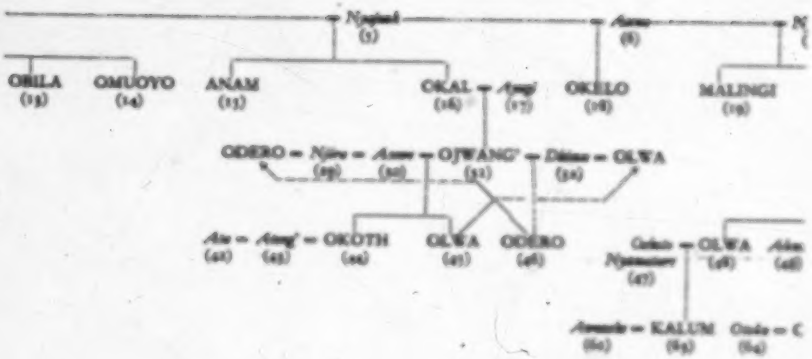

CHIEN — Omieri — RACHUONYO — Nyako
(1) (2) (3) (4)
(descendants by other wives)
SIPUL (9)
HOMO — Ajwang' — Adero (12) OBILA (13) OMU (14
(10) (11)
NG'ECH (15) RACHUONYO — Odet (17) OWUOR (18)
(16)
OPOLE (41)
Amoya — OMUTHO
(60) (61)

Men shown in CAPITALS.
Women shown in *Italics*.

——— common co-wives with husbands.
- - - - used where men inherit widows of re
longing to a different generation to

[facing p. 32a]

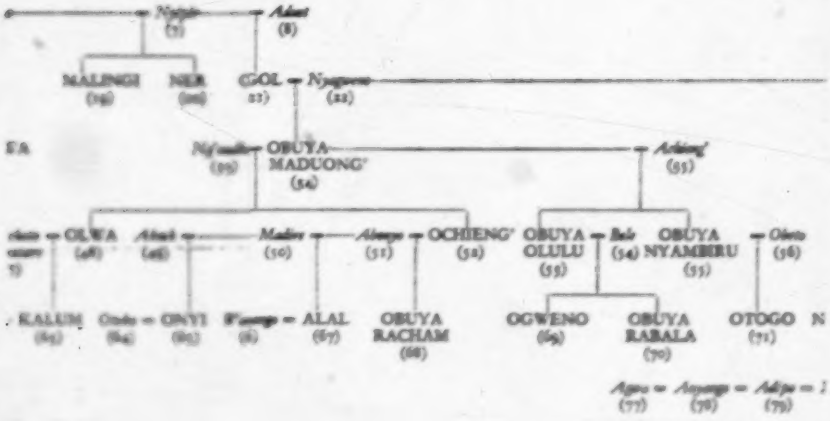
613



with husbands.
their widows or relatives be-
cause generation to their own.

[facing p.32.b]

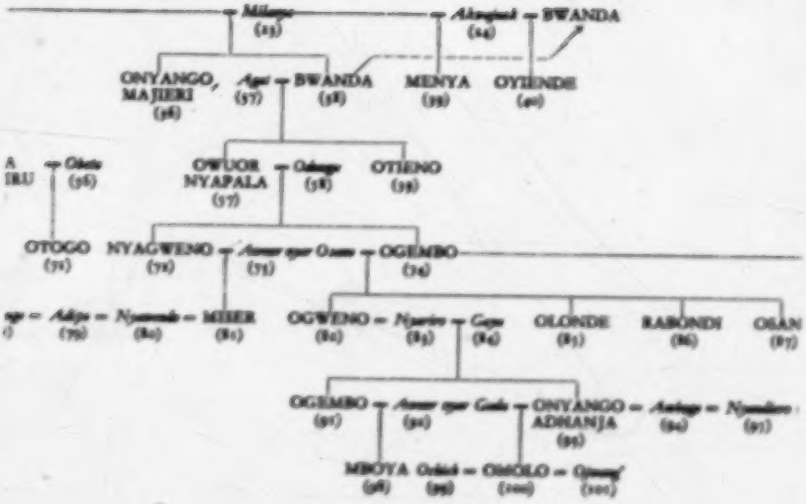
613



p. 6

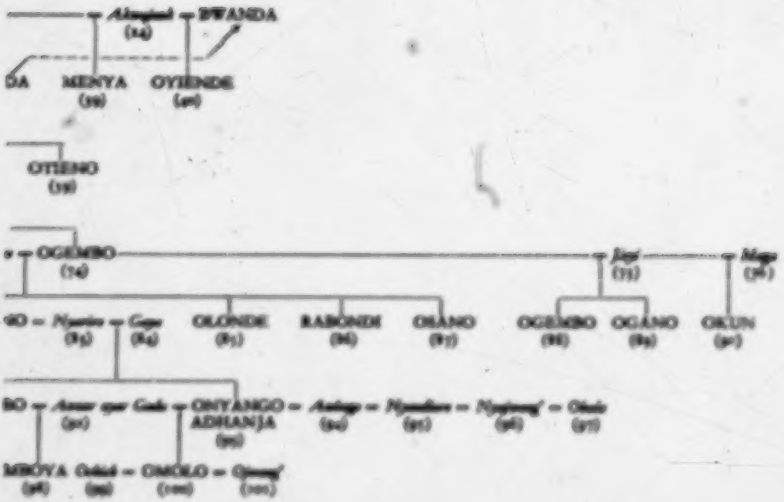
[facing p. 32, c]

613



[facing p.32, d]

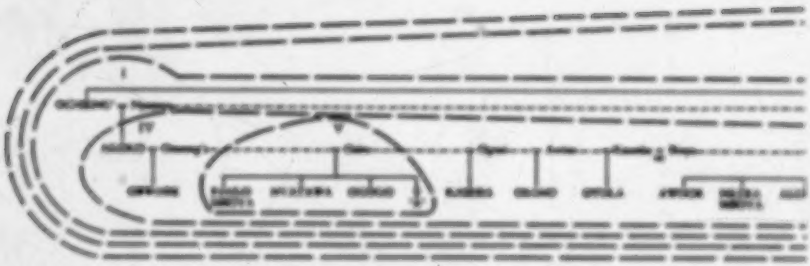
613



[facing p. 32, 2]

63

Men shown in CAPITALS.
Women ,, ,, small letters.
- - - - connects co-wives with husband.
——— ——— shows the rounds of distribution exhibited in the order in which they occurred.
= marriages without male issue.



[facing p. 33, a]

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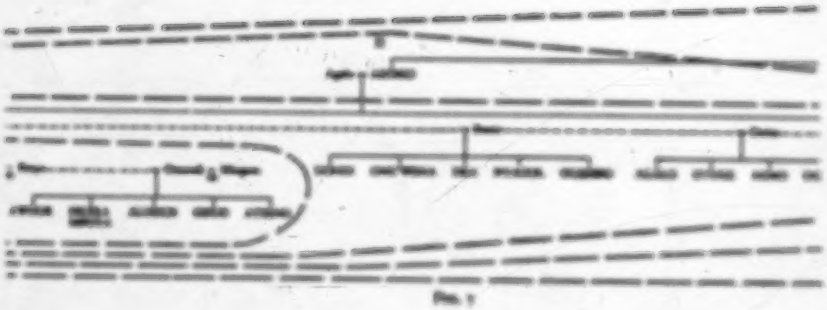

[facing p. 33, b]

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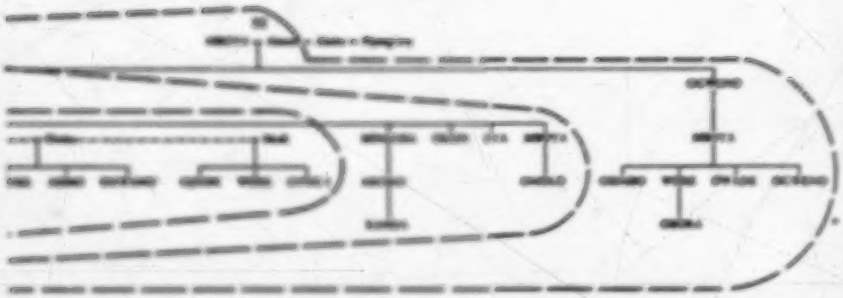

[facing p. 33, c]

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and 52, 54 and 24) are co-ordinate because they segment from the same generation level although their actual eponyms do not. This ambiguity arises when an ancestor has surviving issue only through one wife and one son, or when men leave issue only by inherited wives as in Nos. 45 and 46.

The question arises why the following segments are not recognized as *dimdi* superordinate to the segments they contain:

No. 11 as the *dimo* superordinate to Nos.				23 and 60
10	"	"	"	11 and 12
16	"	"	"	29, 44, and 52
30	"	"	"	63, 63, and 51
33	"	"	"	62, 63, 63, and 51
84	"	"	"	32 and 33
73	"	"	"	81, 82, 83, 86, and 87
74	"	"	"	73 and 76
77	"	"	"	73 and 74
77	"	"	"	77 and 79
83	"	"	"	56 and 57.

A variety of reasons may contribute to the explanation of these anomalies in particular cases, but the most usual reasons can be illustrated from one out of these examples—the *dimo* of Kogweno (82). Kogweno, with its population of over 30,000 (estimate for year 1947), has far outgrown its co-ordinates Kolonde (83), Karabondi (86), and Kosawo (87), of whom only Karabondi has a population of as many as 1,000. Kamineo (81), with a population of over 4,000, is also very large, and both Kogweno and Kamineo overshadow all the other *dimdi* in Kadure (8) in numbers, territory, and consequently in political power. Kogweno and Kamineo, therefore, need no intermediate level of political organization between their own and that of Kadure (8), and affairs too big for settlement within Kogweno or Kamineo could only be dealt with by Kadure as a whole. Thus *dimdi* such as Kokwaya (24), Kanyango Majani (56), Kotieno (59), and Kakwajuok (24) would join in council with Kogweno (82) and Kamineo (81) on equal terms although they belong to much higher levels of segmentation. On the other hand, small *dimdi* such as Kolonde (83), Karabondi (86), and Kosawo (87) cannot even claim this seniority to counterbalance their lack of size. They might get places in the council of Kadure (8) by courtesy, their voices carrying little weight unless through commanding individual ability, or else they might be, commonly so, tacked on to Kogweno (82), and rely on the proximity of their relationship to this lineage to secure their rights.

Furthermore, *dimdi* which are somewhat overshadowed by their rivals may form subsidiary groupings which break the principle of co-ordination by including some but not all the co-ordinates in a superordinate segment. Thus Kolonde (83), Karabondi (86), Kosawo (87), Kajuyi (77), and Kanyaga (76), tend to group themselves together as Kagwadho (74), to the near exclusion of Kogweno (82), which can stand alone without their help. Kokwaya (24), Kanyango Majani (56), and Kakwajuok (24) tend to group as Kagol (21), to the exclusion of the descendants of Bwanda (58). In these instances Kagwadho (74) and Kagol (21) have the quasi-status of *dimdi*, being regarded as such by some but not all of the segments they contain.

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613 There may also be cases of former *dimoi* which have lapsed into passivity. This seems to have happened to Kowuor Nyapala (17) and to Kagoya (84). Since Kanyairo (83) is a *gweng'* and *dimo* on its own and has been so for several generations, the original split was probably between Kanyairo (83) and Kagoya (84), so that both these segments would then have been a *dimo*. But the growth of Kagoya was so rapid that it quickly split again into the *dimoi* of Kowuor (92) and Konyango Adhanja (93) and later these segmented even further. This seems to have made Kagoya redundant as a *dimo*, for it was no longer a necessary intermediate grouping for political or economic purposes between its own subordinates and Kogweno (81), and it must therefore have lapsed into a class B segment, leaving Kanyairo without any genealogically co-ordinate *dimo*. Kowuor Nyapala (17) is a similar case, and here, too, it probably happened that Kowuor Nyapala and Koriano (19) originally divided each as a *dimo*, after which the rapid growth and further segmentation of the descendants of Owuor Nyapala rendered it redundant, with the large *dimoi* within it, such as Kogweno (81) and Kaniaer (81), acting as immediate subdivisions of the *dimo* of Kadoet (8). Koriano (19) was then, like Kanyairo, left without any *dimo* genealogically co-ordinate with it.

Kalwojoch (24), Kanjim (25), Kadhiamo (31), and Kowuor (91) represent another class of *dimoi* derived from women. Here the reason for choosing female *dimo* eponyms appears to have been not the convenience of having segmentation on co-wives, but the fact that they were inherited by stepsons or brothers-in-law after their husbands' death, and thus united in one segment lines of descent begotten on them by different lineage members.

We have seen that the general relations of *dimoi* are far from being in strict conformity with the theory of co-ordination which the Luo speak of as a norm in lineage activity. But when a *dimo* acts ritually it conforms to this much more closely, just as the *ayanda* segments of class B do. For example, if Konyango Majeri (56) sacrificed to their eponym they would call representatives of Kalwanda (58) as their co-ordinate, and of Kalwoya (54) and Kalwojoch (24), which are co-ordinate to Konyango Majeri and Kalwanda combined. Here Kalwanda is called into activity, and the great disparity in strength between it and the other segments represented is ignored. Similarly, in ritual Kanyairo (83) would treat Kagoya (84) as a *dimo* co-ordinate to it, although in other matters Kanyairo has to submit to equality with Kandeoya (98), Komolo (100), and Konyango Adhanja (93), which are genealogically junior to it. In ritual relations the genealogical order of seniority between the lineage segments which are called is also strictly observed, for the elders who represent them receive their shares of meat, or take their places for the drinking of beer, according to this order of precedence.

However, the members of *dimoi* probably become so used to the order of relationships which prevails between them in political or economic affairs that on the rather infrequent ritual occasions when strict genealogical co-ordination might be preserved they may fail to take advantage of it. It is likely to be segments such as Konyango Majeri (56) or Koriano (19) which search at opportunities for enforcing theoretical parities on ritual occasions, precisely because in day-to-day affairs they forfeit their seniority to segments such as Kaniaer (81) and Kogweno (81) which they cannot match in strength.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Lee FL11

VI. RITUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EXPRESSIONS OF LINEAGE STRUCTURE

It is among the *separate* segments subordinate to minimal *dimoi*, which have not had time to become too unequal in size, that the strictest adherence to the theory of co-ordination is practised. As an illustration of this I give here an account of the performance of *rite*—a ritual transaction between a husband and his wife's mother—at which I was present. It is a typical example of the co-ordinate activity of class B segments. The diagram (Fig. 7, facing p. 55) is a continuation of the chart (Fig. 6), and shows the members of the *dimoi* of Mbeya (38) who participated or were represented on this occasion. Female as well as male members of the lineage participate; consequently the personnel of the smallest *separate* segments includes both the wives and daughters of male lineage members, and so coincides with that of the extant elementary families. But in the genealogy of dead ancestors the daughters of members are omitted, as having normally married and become accretions to other lineages and so lost significance in their own, while the wives of members still have to be included for their structural importance.

Since a lineage tends to act ritually at two levels simultaneously—the super-ordinate lineage deployed into its major segments[1]—it is all the easier to picture it, even at its remotest ancestral levels, as a family divided into its component cells (see above, p. 51, 'compression'). It was the woman 'A' whose *rite* was being performed. She belongs to the elementary family of her mother Osiro, a minimal *separate* segment. Osiro's two childless co-wives and the five others, with their sons, represent the compound polygynous family of Akoko-Ochieng', now dead. The compound family of his father, Ochieng'-Akoko, contained the four elementary families of Nyawawa, Bware, Owiro, and Mudi. Ochieng''s father Akoko-Mbeya had been by one wife only, the elementary family of Agulo. Akoko-Mbeya and his brother Ogweno together represent the elementary family of their mother Ahiero, whose agnatic descendants constitute the *separate* of Kabiero within which the *rite* was performed. Mbeya had other wives besides Ahiero, but their descendants are very few and do not live in the *gweng'* called after Mbeya. The result is that the descendants of Ahiero can call themselves *dimoi* Kambeya, since they have successfully claimed Mbeya's name for it, but in ritual situations such as this it is more correct for them to call themselves *separate* Kabiero, for *separate* Kambeya would include the descendants of Mbeya's other wives, who had no share in the occasion.

Rite is said to be a *singruok* (precaution) with the mother of one's wife. Until it is performed the wife is ordinarily free to go to her home and associate with other men, visiting the *simbo* (see p. 19) if she likes, but after *rite* has been performed she can no longer do so, and her own lineage would prevent her. The husband kills a bull, retains one foreleg for himself, and sends the rest to his wife's mother for division by the elders of the *separate*. The senior living elder of *separate* Kabiero is Dondi-Ochieng'. The first round of meat distribution (marked 1 on the diagram) was the taking of their shares by Dondi, Asuso, and Olundi, senior living elders of the *separate* segments of Bware, Owiro, and Mudi. Each of these, after taking his share home, made a subsidiary division of it to his senior brothers or to the eldest

[1] *The Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 51.

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sons of senior brothers who were dead; thus Dondi to Ong'wena, Dio, Nyagol, and Ogendo; Asmo to Ojwang' and to the eldest sons of Agulo and Oyuke who were dead; Ojuok to Were and Oyugi. This completed the major segments of the *oganda* of Odiang'-Akoko except for that of Nyawera, the actual grandmother of the woman; this segment, as here, came last. The lineage of Odiang'-Akoko has as its co-ordinate those of Mingora, Okun, Geya, and Mbeya. There were no representatives of Okun or Geya present, but Randa and Ouolo were there for Mingora and Mbeya, and their taking of shares completed the distribution to the major segments of the *oganda* of Akoko-Mbeya (marked II on the diagram). This latter has one co-ordinate in the *oganda* of Ojwenu, which was represented by Ojwenu's senior grandson Otiendo, who took his portion to share it with Owuolo and Ojwenu, younger brothers, and Okora, eldest son of his dead brother Were. Thus the senior structure of *oganda* Kaloro (marked III on the diagram) was represented in the ritual. There followed the distribution within the 'core' *oganda* of Nyawera, the woman's own grandmother (IV on the diagram). First the woman's half-brothers Okwaro, Kasera, Omoro, Otula, Awuor, Hezon Mbeya, and Ahoch took their portions; then there was a separate distribution in the *oganda* of Osiro (V on the diagram) to the woman's senior brothers Paulo Mbeya,[1] Nyawera, and Ojwayo.

During the morning, before the actual distribution was made, all the elders present ate together certain other portions of meat[2] which by custom have to be eaten now on this occasion. Besides this there was the customary portion for the eldest married daughter of the woman's mother; the neck and top ribs to be cooked by the woman's mother for her brothers to eat together with any friends they like to call; the kidneys to be cooked by the woman's sisters who are still in their mother's house, and eaten by them together with any friends they like to call, and the liver and remaining ribs and offal to be eaten by all the women of the homestead where the division is made. The division of the animal might be tabulated as follows:

a. First footing: for the daughters, husband of the woman.
a. Second footing: for all the descendants of the woman's father (except those who receive under *a*).
b. First binding: (*a*) to be divided to the hands of the heroes of each of the co-wives of the woman's paternal grandmother, and to be shared by them with their surviving senior brothers and the eldest sons of any deceased senior brothers;
(*b*) to be divided to the hands of the heroes of the senior brothers of the woman's paternal grandfather and similarly shared by them;
(*c*) to be divided to the hands of the heroes of the senior brothers of the woman's paternal great-grandfather and similarly shared by them. (No intermediate division to the hands of the heroes of the co-wives of the woman's great-grandmother because Agulo was the only wife of Akoko-Mbeya.)
c. Second binding: for the woman's mother and her sons.
c. Neck and top ribs: for the woman's brothers and their friends.

[1] Paulo Mbeya was Chief of Kamkwamboo from 1951 to 1958, and since then has been Executive Secretary of the Luoni Native Council of South Nyanzaland. In 1958 he was appointed a nominated Native Member on the East Africa Central Assembly. I was deeply saddened to learn his much-loved assistance during my stay in Kamkwamboo.

[2] These were *kwer* (bones), *mud ng'o* (chest), *mud ngeno* (ribs), *dhoo*, and *abala*. The abala and *ayoga* are eaten after they have been cooked by the method of their wrapping in bubbling fluid over the open fire.

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6. Liver and remaining ribs and offal: for all the women of the homestead. 613
7. Kidneys: for the woman's sisters still in their mother's house and their friends. 583
8. Customary portion for the eldest married daughter of the woman's mother.
9. Customary portions to be eaten, some raw, some cooked by *bale*, by all the elders assembled for the distribution. 606

It is worth while to treat this one rite at length, because it is the prototype of so many others. Its special significance is that it takes place at the lowest level of segmentary organization, that it is bound to occur in every family as often as a daughter is married off, and that it draws into a structured participation not merely lineage leaders and senior elders but every man, woman, and child in the family. When the Lao youngsters of either sex begin to grasp why, on certain occasions, a receives a special supply of kidney or ribs to roast on the fire with its playmates, its education in the theory of lineage structure has begun. The same holds true for all the wives of the men who bring home their portions of meat to be cooked, and share them with favourite wives or children, or allow them the scraps. [867]

There are many other occasions on which meat has to be ritually divided. In every 613
case a similar procedure is followed, with the same articulation of lineage structure.
There are the sacrifices previously mentioned, which are made to the ancestor indi- 782
cated by the diviner as the cause of some misfortune. Sacrifice is also made usually
within a year or so of the death of any elder of importance, and the level of lineage 769
whose major segments are called to share in it depends upon the dead man's status.
If he took part in the councils of the maximal lineage its major segments would
certainly be called; if he was of less importance the major segments of a lineage at
some lower level would be called. A further custom occasioning a demonstration
of lineage segmentation is that whereby an elder of importance chooses a bull to be
eaten after his death, the segments of his lineage dividing it among themselves
according to principles similar to those of *nin*.

Besides sacrifices, every beer party, of whatever size and on whatever occasion, is 613
also a display of lineage structure at one level or another. These parties are exceed- 574
ingly frequent, and most frequent of all in the comparative leisure of the dry season, 273
when there is a pause between the completed harvest and the next cultivation not
yet begun. At this time few weeks will pass without a beer party somewhere in the
vicinity, and often they follow on one another for days on end. In every one there
is a core of elders who epitomize the structure of the lineage segments participating
in the occasion. This is all quite apart from the small quantities of beer which old [571]
men like to drink with two or three neighbours independently of any ceremonial
pretext. But all parties of any size have a ritual occasion, whether it be one of the
innumerable occasions resulting from death which are strung out over a period of
at least one and often two years, or in connexion with marriage, or for the settle-
ment of the periodic and seasonal affairs of a class A lineage.

In the larger beer parties the pitchers of beer are distributed among lineage seg- 613
ments in the same way as are the joints of meat after a sacrifice. In all of them the 574
order of drinking is entirely determined by lineage seniority, starting with the repre- 576
sentatives of the major segments of the superordinate lineage, in the order of seniority
of their eponymous ancestors, and downwards through the subordinate levels of the
line particularly concerned. The level of major segments involved is always an index

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of the importance of the occasion, and of the status of the individual concerned in it, and the procedure further epitomizes the internal structure of these groups.

For present purposes the significance of all these ritually canalized social gatherings is that their place of meeting is always the family homestead, and in this way from time to time even the remotest members of the least important family have vividly impressed upon them the segmentary principles of the social structure to which they belong. The underlying economic and domestic arrangements through which these assemblies are, as it were, financed by the provision of food—which may be required to feed large numbers of people for days on end—themselves occasion a subsidiary marshalling of lineage organization. Convenience dictates that the families most concerned in this shall be those which are not only agnatically but spatially nearest to one another. This means that the levels of structure epitomized are similar to those involved in the *nia* ceremony. The primary organizational responsibility falls on the chief wife or widow of the homestead of assembly, who orders the contributions of its other female household heads. Then the senior wife of the head of the *ayanda* group at the next higher level of segmentation has a like duty to organize the contribution of her group, followed by the female heads of each *ayanda* co-ordinate to hers in order of genealogical seniority. After this the next higher level of segments is called into play, and so on, the number of subsequent levels which must be called upon depending on the scale of the occasion, as reflected in the numbers of those who attend and the length of time that they stay. Thus not only as members of the entertaining homestead, but also as members of the many neighbouring homesteads drawn in to assist in the commissariat, the housewives and elder daughters who cook the food, the young children of both sexes who must run as messengers and act as carriers of the food itself, all repeatedly have impressed upon their experience the lower levels of the lineage structure which permeates their society. In the rural isolation of a subsistence economy these are the events which loom large on the social horizon, occupying the mind and feeding conversation. It is hardly surprising that a people like the Luo grow up with a complete practical grasp, at a level which requires no abstract formulation, of those principles of social organization which seem at first so intricate and confusing to the outsider.

Ayanda segments within the minimal *dhoot* and *gweng'* also act as mutual assistance groups. It is within them that cattle may be borrowed for making marriage payments. Nowadays it is the members of such groups who rely on one another for the loan of small sums of money required in the many transactions resulting from new needs. They tend to meet for consideration of any matters of common concern; these meetings are rather informal, but usually recognize the leadership of the member who is eldest by lineage seniority, and are often accompanied by the drinking of beer.

VII. THE MECHANISM OF SEGMENTATION

It is now possible to give further details of how certain class B segments (*ayanda*) within a minimal class A lineage achieve class A status themselves as units of primary settlement, the basic segments in the articulated system of *gweng'* and *dhoot*. When this occurs, of course, the previous minimal class A segment is raised from its

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minimal extra to operate as superordinate of the newly formed segments. The process is an extension on a larger scale, of that which begins whenever married sons leave their father's homestead and form separate ones of their own. Custom sets limits to the period within which this occurs. A son cannot leave his father's homestead and form one of his own till he himself has a son able to 'carry the axe' in the ritual of opening a new homestead. On the other hand, a son is not supposed to stay on in his father's homestead after he has a daughter who is nubile. When this occurs while he still has no son, he must move to the homestead of one of his father's brothers or other agnatic relative. If his father dies before he has been able to establish his own homestead he must then sacrifice to his father before doing so. Within these limits the spanning apart of married sons from their father's homestead will depend on their relations with one another, their character and ambition, the contrary pulls of allegiance to a common father matched by the jealousy of sons of different mothers, and the division between brothers matched by the need to unite in competition with other sibling groups. These human relations will always be further pointed by the need of every family for its own building, arable, and grazing land. When a family segments it may be able simply to divide its land correspondingly to satisfy all the segments, or else the latter must collectively occupy a larger area than before. Similarly, when a group[1] splits into several new groups it may simply divide its territory or have to occupy more at the same time. The net result of all these integrative and disintegrative forces is worked out within the framework determined by the Luo adherence to an agnatic basis of social grouping. Throughout, the behaviour of segments is largely a repetition on the group plane of certain attitudes of individuals within the family, the people themselves regarding the lineage system as a magnified reflection of the family process. Both are, of course, the product of human biological growth and reproduction interacting with a particular set of values expressed within a limiting physical environment. It is therefore misleading to represent them only by a formal analysis which omits intrinsic causes of variation.

Given the structure of the Luo family as earlier described, if a man marries several women and begets sons who repeat the process, the result is bound to be the multiplication of homesteads. To the extent that the families of a whole settlement act in this way, the result is bound to be the multiplication of settlements. Conversely, if families fail to multiply, homesteads either disappear or are merely replaced, and the membership of a settlement is also merely replaced, with no change of structure except an increase in genealogical depth. The rivalry rooted between individuals and groups within the family is repeated on a larger scale in the natural divergence of interests and weakening of sentiments of solidarity between different *segmentary* segments. Complementary to this general weakening of bonds which predisposes fission must be the appearance of initiative in some individual suitably placed to lead his group in the establishment of a new settlement. This positive factor is the necessary precipitating agent of the process in which the *new threads* of the primary settlements are formed. The size of each co-ordinate resulting from the fission of a superordinate segment must be adequate to admit male membership to support the responsibilities of a separate settlement.

Finally, there must be adequate land available in which the *new group* can be

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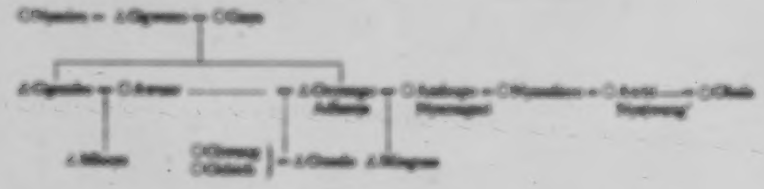
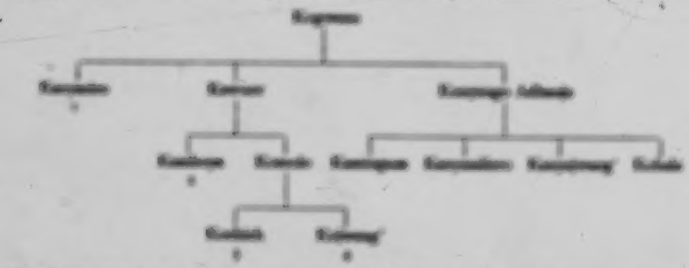
613 founded. *Gweng'* left a belt of unoccupied land in between one another's territory, referred to as *thim* (wilderness). This insulated one lineage from another, and disputes between lineages took place in it. It was also a reservoir which could be drawn upon for expansion when a new *gweng'* wanted land to found its settlement. Kanachoonyo is now densely settled except where land is poor, and there is practically *no thim* left which could support new settlements. Consequently the process of *gweng'* and *dhoot* formation has now reached its limit in Kanachoonyo, as indeed it has in many parts of Lowland sublay for the same reason. But some parts of South Kavirondo still have land to spare, in which the old process of settlements splitting into new segments and expanding into the *thim* can still go on. The other lineages of the Joluo group (see map, Fig. 3)—Kabondo, Kanyamwa, Kanyagu, and Kadem—all have *thim* still left.

The process of *gweng'* formation is best demonstrated with reference to a concrete instance. The diagram below shows the genealogical relations of the eponymous ancestors of *dhoot* descended from Ogwena, see (b), fig. 6 a male ancestor fifth in line of descent from Kachoonyo.



The present structural relations of these *dhoot* may be charted as follows:



The four numbered segments are all minimal class A lineages. Their structural positions are obviously very different. Their comparative depth is indicated by the fact that the present *gweng'* head of Kanyamwa belongs to the fifth descending generation, the head of Kambonyo to the third, and the heads of Kochieh and Kojwang' to the second descending generations from their eponymous ancestors. In all these cases the difference in depth is correlated with a difference in the rate of numerical expansion. Kanyamwa has grown more slowly, Kochieh and Kojwang' more rapidly of the four. Indeed, the line of Kochieh and Kojwang' has undergone no less than four

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stages of class A segmentation in very quick succession: first, the separation of the descendants of Ogwezzi's second wife Gaya from those of his first wife Nyasiro; second, the separation of the descendants of Awuze—the wife of Ogendho inherited after his death by his younger brother Onyango Adhanja—from the descendants of Onyango Adhanja's own wives; third, the separation of the descendants of Omolo from those of his brother Mboya; finally, the separation of the descendants of Omolo's two wives Odiech and Ojwang'. During all this process Kanyaira grew so slowly that it failed to segment at all. Of course, each new stage of segmentation does not destroy the groupings of the last, but raises their operation to a higher level. The fact that Kodiech and Kojwang' split apart to form new *gweng'* does not destroy Komolo as a *gweng'*, but rather gives it a new importance as it is then no longer a minimal *dhoot* but has its own subordinate *dhoot*. So by an immense process of secular competitive elimination, certain households and homesteads of the past have given rise to *agnatic* segments which have achieved the status of *gweng'* and *dhoot*, and have finally been raised by successive stages of segmentation to their present level as maximal lineages.

But are the figures in these genealogies historical figures, and did these families really multiply and these segments, or are all the circumstantial details a *post facto* rationalization of structural relations in terms of a lineage ideology? It seems on balance an easier hypothesis to suppose that there is a genuine element of truth in recorded genealogies and in recollections of recent events, that the omissions from and additions to factual history increase with time depth, and in proportion to the strength of motives for distortion and to the lack of reinforcement of recollections of group events by frequent manipulation in various social activities and embodiment in the pattern of territorial settlement, rather than to regard them purely as a mirage reflecting certain functions of the contemporary social structure. Genealogy is not myth, though it may well, and for the Luo certainly does, bridge the gap between an actual present and a mythical past. It is unlikely that a people, whose memory is shown by indubitable checks to be good (e.g. in the recollections of the coming of individual Europeans to Lookland more than fifty years ago, and of other known historical events of the same period), are wholly inaccurate in what they say about their immediate ancestors' activities in founding *gweng'* and about the descent of *gweng'* members from a personal grandmother or grandfather. And if this is accepted there is no reason to throw much more doubt on the accounts of earlier ancestors, up to five or six generations back, where these conform to what is evidently true of more recent times. At the remoter genealogical levels the need for caution is obvious, and the stories told of late ancestors twelve to fourteen generations back are of a mythical type easily distinguishable from the more historical accounts of events and persons nearer in time. The Luo of Kanyidoto frankly admit that they know much less about their ancestors before they crossed over Kavirondo Gulf to their present territory about seven generations ago. From this time onward they can give endless details of ancestral activity, for memories are provided by the topography itself and their continuous association with it; but before the crossing they have little to say of their ancestors except for those eponyms who are still of structural importance and who are the focus of a rich body of myth. I have, therefore, approached the account of the more remote levels of the lineage structure on

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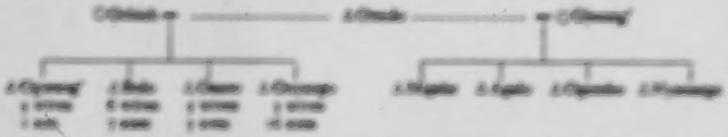
the assumption that it is likely to be correct, in proportion to the certainty with which it is given, the absence of deviant and contradictory versions, and its conformity with the probabilities established by a knowledge of the forces operative in contemporary family life and in the contemporary activity of lineage segments.

To return to the lineage of Komolo: the rapidity of its growth can be seen from the diagram below showing some of the somewhat male agnatic descendants of Omolo. Both Omolo's wives produced four sons, and the families of all these multiplied. The sons of Odiech between them married nineteen wives and begot twenty-nine sons, all these latter themselves having issue. The sons of Oywang' were also prolific, but I have no exact figures for their agnatic issue. Rweya, the present *jodong' gweng'* of Kodiech, is a younger son of Onyango the founder of the *gweng'*, and Bolo, the present *jodong' gweng'* of Kayweng', is son of its founder Agulo. Rweya's father Onyango was also a very famous leader, acting as chief elder of all Kanekweyo.



The conditions of *gweng'* formation were less suited to the reproductive growth of Omolo's patrilineal descendants, the presence of leaders necessary for the new differentiation, the suitable numerical size of the *gweng* defined by the laws of agnatic fission, and the availability of sites for them to occupy.[1] The descendants of Omolo were quite numerous enough to form more than a single *gweng'*, and by dividing according to the segments of Omolo's two wives they formed two new *gweng* each of suitable size. They could not, however, have divided into the segments of Omolo's sons, for this would have meant fission into too many major segments each of too small size. None of these, except perhaps Onyango's, would have been large enough to form a *segment gweng'*. It would have been very unusual for Onyango's lineage to form a *gweng'* while its co-descendants were unable to do so, for these latter would refuse to join Onyango's *gweng'* and call themselves after him, and could only remain in the undivided *gweng'* of Omolo or else divide into *gweng* called after his wives, as actually happened. It is practical questions of this sort that explain some claims to derive their agnatic structure from spiral ancestors who were women, and to be called after them, and which give rise to the principle that one co-ordinate cannot split off from its superordinate lineage without the sun.[2] It is fruitless to argue that these ancestresses were merely the wives of agnatic forebears and not even members of the lineage in the strict sense. To any question as to why they are desired from and called after non-agnatic females the members of such a lineage simply say

[1] It appears that one or a few individuals, that is, one or a few male heirs having reached the status of independent family heads, giving a total population of about one hundred persons, may have been about the minimum size necessary for the founding of a new settlement. In the instance of Gem in South Gem country there is a case of a *gweng'* founded with as many which in fact had fewer agnatic descendants but which started with about ten.

[2] See if all but one of a group of co-ordinate descents are ancestresses, the one co-ordinate of ancestresses also to claim to call the ancestress of the lineage superordinate to them all, as in the case of the wives of Ulimo, see above, p. 45.

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'because she is our mother'. The members of a lineage with a male eponymous ancestor reply as unhesitatingly 'because he is our father'. Lineage members certainly appear to think that the one derivation is as normal, logical, and useful as the other, and co-ordinate segments are tied together as well by descent from wives of a common husband as from sons of a common mother. Where there is a choice of points of origin, as when a co-wife has one son only, and either her name or his would serve to distinguish the same agnatic group from its co-ordinates, it is natural that the son is usually chosen as eponym. It remains true, none the less, that as focal points in the system of class B segmentation, both in family alignments and in ritual organization, both while still alive and when they have become points in the genealogies of the dead, the wives are frequently as essential as the lineage members who are their husbands, and in the case of class A lineages either may be chosen according to the exigencies of the settlement process. This ambivalence must be implicit in any lineage system patrilineal or matrilineal, for in either case the members of the unilateral descent group can only produce heirs and lineage members through cohabitation with non-members, who interpose their own pattern of potential segmentation inter-mediate to that of the spinners themselves.

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An attempt has been made to show how lineages arise from the matrix of family life. Lineage and family differ by their unilateral and bilateral emphasis. Despite the fact that the Luo uphold the unilateral basis of the lineage when they say that the mother's blood counts for nothing in procreation, it has been seen that women are of great importance in the day-to-day affairs and in the actual structure of lineages. A man's daughters are members of their father's lineage. They may be present at lineage rituals, and even after their marriage into other lineages they may return to the lineage of their birth on important occasions; but their children and descendants are entirely cut off from the lineages of origin of their mothers. A man's wives always belong to other lineages, since the maximal lineage is exogamous, but as wives, and as mothers of lineage members, they also may be recipients of rituals of their husband's lineage; they are fundamental pivots in the system of ties and cleavages within the family out of which lineages spring, and in process of time they become ancestresses within their husband's lineage and may be the points of origin of lineage segments. The position of women in the lineage is thus of great moment, and is its ambivalence lineage and family are linked. As far as the individual member of either is concerned, there is a hen-egg relationship between them which cannot be further broken down by sociological techniques.